THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN

A YEARBOOK OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

EDITED BY
ALFRED KREYMBORG
LEWIS MUMFORD
PAUL ROSENFELD

$3.50

Making Literary History

EARLY in 1926, Van Wyck Brooks, Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford and Paul Rosenfeld, after many sessions, came to a full agreement about the aims of the American Caravan, and were ready to embark on an adventure that was to give them far more trouble, but also more happiness of a sort, than they had counted upon.

They sought a publisher, but a publisher was hard to find. Something that had never been done before was too great a risk, even for those publishing firms that were thought of as the "progressive" houses. The Macaulay Company is proud that it shared the faith of the editors in the vitality of American literature sufficiently to undertake the publishing risk.

Like other publishing ventures regarded as "risks," the American Caravan turned out to be a much needed and much desired literary institution. The First Caravan was selected by The Literary Guild. England showed its curiosity about the New American literature by ordering a substantial edition. And the volume was perhaps the most widely reviewed and commented upon of the year. The Second Caravan continued and extended this literary ferment.

While neither of the two volumes of The American Caravan has been in any sense a best seller, each has reached a large audience, and in proportion to its numbers a very important audience. Its readers to some extent form the advance guard, the determinant of the public taste of tomorrow.

In a more concrete way the Ameri-

Continued on back flap of wrapper

STRAND PRICE
5.00

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/newamericancarav0000vari

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN

A YEARBOOK OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

EDITED BY
ALFRED KREYMBORG
LEWIS MUMFORD
PAUL ROSENFELD

THE MACAULAY COMPANY
NEW YORK MCMXXIX

COPYRIGHT 1929 BY THE MACAULAY COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Editors dedicate
THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN
to
VAN WYCK BROOKS
in lasting fellowship

CONTENTS

The Daughters of the Sun	*Phelps Putnam*	1
York Beach	*Jean Toomer*	12
Cataract	*S. Guy Endore*	84
Midsummer Passion	*Erskine Caldwell*	96
Tracing Life with a Finger	*Erskine Caldwell*	100
The Wedding	*Joseph Vogel*	107
Intact	*Pearl Andelson Sherry*	127
Cool Swamp and Field Woman	*Joseph Mitchell*	133
Geld Your Enemy!	*Gerald Sykes*	140
An Illiterate but Interesting Woman	*Robert McAlmon*	161
	E. E. Cummings	165
Hanging by My Thumbs	*Robert Cantwell*	184
The Obelisk	*William Rollins, Jr.*	199
Thirteen Poems	*Stanley J. Kunitz*	296
Ballad of the Hangman's Widow	*Marjorie Allen Seiffert*	306
Nine Poems	*Evelyn Scott*	312
To Emily	*Wallace Gould*	323
Evolution	*Lincoln Fitzell*	328
Actually: a Poem for Mimi (on skiing)	*Cary Ross*	330
Full Levant	*James Henry Sullivan*	331
Canyon City	*James Henry Sullivan*	332
City Without Images	*Kathleen Tankersley Young*	333

Toxins	*Matthew Josephson*	335
Three Poems	*Helen Pearce*	338
Four Poems	*Leon Srabian Herald*	340
Three Poems	*Isidor Schneider*	343
Ballad of the Great Emperor	*John Gould Fletcher*	349
The Visitor	*David Carter*	352
Home Talent	*Clarence E. Cason*	356
The Extension and Reintegration of the Human Spirit Through the Poetry Mainly French and American Since Poe and Baudelaire	*Yvor Winters*	361
Tread the Green Grass	*Paul Green*	405
Notes on Contributors		461

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Caldwell, Erskine 96
Cantwell, Robert 184
Carter, David 352
Cason, Clarence E. 356
Cummings, E. E. 165
Endore, S. Guy 84
Fitzell, Lincoln 328
Fletcher, John Gould 349
Gould, Wallace 323
Green, Paul 405
Herald, Leon Srabian 340
Josephson, Matthew 335
Kunitz, Stanley J. 296
McAlmon, Robert 161
Mitchell, Joseph 133
Pearce, Helen 338
Putnam, Phelps 1
Rollins, William, Jr. 199
Ross, Cary 330
Schneider, Isidor 343
Scott, Evelyn 312
Seiffert, Marjorie Allen 306
Sherry, Pearl Andelson 127
Sullivan, James Henry 331
Sykes, Gerald 140
Toomer, Jean 12
Vogel, Joseph 107
Winters, Yvor 361
Young, Kathleen Tankersley 333

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN

PHELPS PUTNAM

The Daughters of the Sun

(Bill Williams, a bastard child, having been abandoned to that darkness which was his hell, at last met with his father, the sun. Bill was reborn and started again on his wandering career. His father had made promises to him, and Bill found that they were not vain. One day he was idle in a valley between Taos, New Mexico, and Fort Garland, Colorado. And he thought that he would render an account to his father. He left his hat on the ground in the shade of the cottonwood where he had been resting and walked out into the light where he stood, facing the sun, and spoke.)

Our Lord, creative Sun, shine on my lips,
Now make me luminous for I must speak
And to your glory, golden monster, praise
The cloudless daughters of your loins.

Lord Sun, support your child—
I have given up my body to your power;
Ascetic flaming tiger, you
Have raked my carcass of its bitterness.
For I was born to dark hysteria
And my misty heart among a hundred hands
Was broken up and eaten and the blood drained,
And my bride and children cherished and forgot,
And I recoiled.
But in the end I came into your servitude,
And you, bright scavenger of my heart,
Unbound my nerves, renewed my chastity,
Stripped off my flesh, and left your worshipper
Serene and like a skeleton.
Then, generous Father, you reclothed my bones

With a suave and cleanly sheath, of which the veins
Were swollen with the certainty of light.
And then at last, intolerable Beast,
You crouched upon the zenith, lashing your tail,
And smiled, and I heard you say, "Obedient boy,
You have survived rebirth; you have done well
And I release you to the school of love.
You will find my daughters there,
The incestuous girls who shall recognize your blood."

And hearing this, I laughed.
I thought this was the pandering, the lies
Which have been heard before from heavenly tongues.
For men have said a thousand ways
That women are the children of the moon;
They have compared their women to the sea,
Which frets, devours men and ships
And spurs itself to war, but must return,
Diana's hunting bitch, to her heel again.
And I myself have heard them shriek, then dive
Into resistless femalehood.
And I laughed; but the Sun purred
And he curled his enormous tongue around my thighs.

The Lord Sun promised me, and on the Earth
Conceived the frolic sister of my nerves,
The joyous clay infused with subtle heat,
The sudden gift, unfaltering,
Offering the ardent, hungry wound
As a burying-place for too much memory.
I praise her whom the Sun had filled with flame,
My sensual rose, my bright and succulent flower,
She who would cheat the watchful moon
Without remorse; the candor of her lust
Blazed in my sun-washed heart
And her scent lives in my enchanted brain
As if it were just now distilled

For me along the folding of her skin.
I was a ghostly wanderer and she
Created in our flesh the carnal soul—
I have taken up the heat of life from her,
And now I praise, for never any more
Shall I be ignorant of incredible delight
Or envious of earthly ravishment.

The Lord Sun promised me, and from the Moon
Brought forth refracted loveliness.
Our Lord permits himself these devious ways,
For his pursuit is far and terrible
And his bastard daughters echo to the grief
Of morganatic quarrels in their blood;
They see their own confusion and their doom,
And are not pitiful. And I would praise
That keen, dark, fighting daughter of the moon,
The adventuress who would not turn
Nor yield once to the moon-blood in her veins,
But from confusion gained the desert where
She found the acid honor of the Sun.
I praise the only honorable girl—
She had learned how beggarly we are
And crave such nourishment as hers,
But find that we must nourish other hearts
And play the father to insipid dreams.
She had been across the hot and shifting sand,
As she cured my heart with crystal bitterness,
Which was a sensuous waif before her time,
And turned it from its twisted fluttering.

But I was not content, I said, "Lord Sun,
Is this the extent of all your promises?
The perfect trap of generative flesh
Infects my blood with fever heavily,
And the soothing bed of kindliness
Breeds vanity in me, for I am male.

I have heard that love is joy, unkind
And furious as your magnificence."

The Lord Sun promised me, and his pursuit
Came straighter and more near
With a startling clarity against the dark.
And now I humbly praise his three-years child,
Knowing she is unmoved by praise
From me, knowing she does not care
If I should live or die, I am a name,
An ornament, a footman serving love,
And I have poured love for this banqueter
Until it ran as pure as selflessness;
I had not even pride—
My friend is father to this child, not I,
I could not boast, and yet I had my pay;
For when her eyes turned carelessly to mine,
Or when I heard her soft, uncertain voice
Singing her Jesus cradled in the hay
(And once she held my hand when she would sing),
Or when her anger like a sudden mob
Swept into murderous action, I was blessed
With innocence, the undeflected ray
Of God the Sun had touched my untouched core.
Lift up your heads, you tortured egotists,
Do not rejoice in irony or death;
The Sun himself in burning innocence
Has beaten Death at picking dry of bones.
Unlace your twisted guts, betray your eyes
To children who alone are unconfused
In love and cruelty;
And it may be that you will set yourselves
Upon the fleeting path of innocence,
As I was set, till like a saint
I wounded where I walked
And bloodily arrived at being blessed
By our Lord Sun's most small bright sacrament.

But I cannot praise, I am unfit,
For I was not content.
I raised ungodly eyes against the Light,
And said, "My Lord, you are playing with your son.
You did not promise old discoveries."
And I said, "Someone must suffer love
Or other men, although they thirst for it,
Will lose the power to magnify their lust.
They will forget the mold in which the cool,
Imperishable bronze was cast,
And love will be such flimsy woven leaves
As they can manufacture in their minds
To decorate necessity.
Someone must suffer love, my Lord,
And I remind you of your promises."

The Sun burned scornfully on my complaining lips,
And my soul maddening in my flesh
Wheeled upward dizzily and fell
Splintered and broken, and the ether hummed.
The previous universe dissolved,
And the great Sun beat with a violent pulse
And streamers of his blood leapt from his side,
And out of the livid chaos of his heart
Was hurled his new and undefeated child—
I was answered by the arrow of his flesh.
The immaculate shaft curved down
And her fox-coloured hair streamed after her.
As I put up my hands against the Sun
His arrow pierced my unprotected side—
And I had found that the Lord Sun does not lie.

It cannot be the truth—
I am a hobo with a low repute;
It is unlikely I was honored so.
But I can say that in a garden once
The dim strong arm of Chance
Came swinging down across the moon and in its hand

A thin unrusted dagger lightly clasped.
I could not tell the color of her eyes
But they were dark with love
And her head drooped with unaccustomed love.
And I, a fortunate thief, was there
To lift the dagger out of Chance's hand.
Hiding its glamor underneath my coat,
I went away stealthily
By ships and trains and stolen cars and cabs
To a new and distant city; there,
When the door was locked and there was no light
But passing shadows from the river boats
I bent my head and kissed the magic blade.
And all night, white and exquisite,
More beautifully etched than daggers are,
It lay unsheathed and glimmering in my hands.

But these are shadowy phrases, she
Was not an arrow, nor a dagger, nor a mystery.
She was the living anarchy of love,
She was my nourishment, my sister and my child,
My lust, my liberty, my discipline,
And she laid fair, awkward hands upon my head.
She was discourteous as life and death
And kindly as a dry white wine is kind
On a blowsy summer day.
But I cannot speak of her;
In praise or blame my voice drowns in my blood,
I cannot speak; I could not speak before;
Although I knew love fattens on smooth words,
I could not speak at all.
For beyond space she was my quality,
She was the very mask of my desire,
She was more near than love or mimicry—
I do not know how I should speak of her.

I only know I am a liar and an infidel.
I have felt the arrow strike—that was the truth;

She was indeed the shaft the august Sun
Had blazoned for my side to make it bleed.
I do not dare to lie, I have heard
The daughter of the Sun at morning sing.
Pretending sleep I saw her rise from bed,
The light-encircled girl; with lifted arms
She bound her smouldering hair and bathed and sang—

"Well, the lady done wrong,
Yes, the lady done wrong—
Well, she sold her reputation
For the sake of a song.

But it is cool now and his eyes are closed.
When Cleo was in Egypt's land she never saw such eyes
And Catherine of Russia, though she was a royal whore,
Has never known the echo of his eyes.

Why are his hands so clumsy and so delicate?
Because he don't know nothin',
No, he don't know nothin'.
He does not even know the color of my hair,
And that is the least gift I have offered him.

Regard me, mademoiselle;
I have drunk at the source of sanity and insanity
And my heart has the muscles of a dancer.

Sleep, baby, sleep, and dream about freedom and your soul.
I do not dream, for I can see my body in the mirror there,
Thin, white and unbroken,
That should be bathed in blood and is not bathed,
There is my soul and the measure of light and change.

Do not sleep too long, baby;
For we shall not escape death, we shall not escape destruction,
There will be other eyes and perhaps too many eyes,

And I shall forget that you have looked at me;
And winter comes when your mind will stir like fungus in the dark.

Do not dream too long, do not wait—
For now, for a while, we are the chosen ecstasy,
And for now we cast our light upon the sickly moon."

The daughter of the Sun arose and sang,
Leaving a sluggard lover in her bed—
And I was filled with light to such excess
That I became delirious;
At the top of heaven I remembered hell
And the bubbling stench of paralytic dreams
And the strangling friends I had left among the damned.
So I, delirious and alone, went back
Into that usual dusk and there
I eased my friends their strangulated necks
So that they spoke aloud their tragic thoughts
And for the time forgot their pain;
I even brought some out of there entirely.
And I was not amazed,
Having held the joyous day against my side,
And I exulted like a conqueror.

But you, old mangy Tiger, whined in your sleep;
You had prepared the ambush that I met.
For I unlocked the heavenly door and found
Only a room, waiting for suicide,
Empty of her disordered ways, and cold,
And on the floor a fallen paper, saying,
"Sweet, I have been afraid.
I have walked the city, it was desolate.
It was like the hard floor of the sea,
Empty and thick and desolate,
And I alone among the monsters there.
I have defiled our former journeying,

I am a wanderer myself;
And you will not come back."

Sick Beast, I have fled that room to find that I
Am the abandoned tenement of ecstasy,
And to feel no matter where I go I rot
In a breathless jail, with women at the gates,
Their filthy eyes soiling my misery.
You are a withering god.
Supposing I should beg these gifts of you:
To blind my eyes that I may never see
The alien earth on which my arrow fell
Nor the altering of her clear ferocious heart;
To sear my mouth, that I may never curse,
As I have done, her and her ignorance,
Nor taste her mouth, her skin, her delicate tongue,
The aroused and darling nipples answering me;
To lend me sleep for my deserted bed;
To burst my ears so that they shall not hear
Her laughter in my vacant arteries
Ringing disconsolately frail,
Nor hear my friends if they should say, O, well,
He gambled with another fool, who next?
Nor hear my enemies rejoice,
That is the female there he loved,
That knitting-needle of biology,
Claiming she was the instrument of God;
To foul my memory with hate, confusion,
Horror and whatever anodyne;
To fill my heart with poisons so it beats
Slowly like death and still more drowsily
And no more battering in futile agony;
To make me strong, less like her lonely child—
If I should beg these things what could you do?
You are a reckoned mass of impotence
And a crumbling force—if I were seared and sealed,
And my dwindling self protected like a monk,

My spirit would go on with bleeding ends
From the amputation of its company.

For this the cure is death, and I will not die,
Having undergone indignity alive.

Perhaps it will enhance your arrogance
To see the noble children of your blood
Crouch in the humble dust and beg,
Like commoners, for bits of joy.

I am insolent, Father, for I am your son,
And my indignant pride snarls in my veins.
My Lord, release your scholar now from love;
The lesson has gone long enough,
The hour struck long ago, and you failed,
You could not bear that she and I should breed
The warriors who would equal you in light,
And you buried them inside our separate flesh.
Release me, Lord, now let your child advance
Into the intricate wisdom of his mind.
I have seen your daughters undeniably,
I have known your own created heroine,
And she was beautifully made.
Oh, never let her feet, like mine, be maimed,
Nor her be baffled with such argument.
Or give her back; what shall I do unless?
But I shall not ask for grace, I have learned too much;
I shall neither visit hell, I was there too long
And I came away, but I left my body there;
You could find it somewhere, bold and overcome,
Poor and forsaken in its flowering,
With its thin legs and the barrel of its chest,
And elegant, with stubby, nervous hands,
A pug retired with a ruined heart,
And even in hell at ease, though desperate.

(It was trained for balance, taught upon the back
Of a gallant, speedy foal named Lexington,
With tender ears and a clean, decisive neck.)
I have seen light blood flow from my body's mouth
And excellent drink flow in;
I have watched it fence with harsh and amorous skill;
I have felt it think, as women do, in heat—
Dear God, but it gave us joy once in its time—
I could go back and find it lounging there,
But now I know it would be vanity to go,
For I am a graduate, Father, of this school.
I have earned my papers; I must move along
Into the energy of solitude,
While the gorgeous period against dark pain
Lights up with final brilliancy.
Shine on my road, support me when I lie,
For I must go to build a towering house
And furnish it according to our strength.

JEAN TOOMER

York Beach

CHAPTER I

According to Nathan Antrum's philosophy, the pattern of his life led him through alternating phases of apparent fulfilment and apparent nonfulfilment. Sometimes the gifts of earth and of his fellow men more or less corresponded to his inner state; and at such times it was as if his active wishes had found and merged with their objects. At other times the substance of the exterior world seemed fragmentary, insufficient: its various forms and forces did no more than stimulate wishes and cause them to intensify themselves and grow more intense the more they manifested without tangible means of satisfaction. When in this latter state, Antrum moved about, his wishes so intense that they formed a world, a world of sheer wish-force, this world so over-reaching and outleaping the objects round about him that it seemed with sufficient force to free itself from earth and rise to a more perfect planet.

Knowing that both phases were necessary, the one, permitting him to dwell on earth, the other, compelling him to seek and ascend towards superior fulfilment, he affirmed both.

In phases of apparent satisfaction, he felt himself vividly participating in earth-existence, his efforts giving rise to evident proportionate results, life yielding its meanings as ripe fruit yields to the touch. In phases of apparent nonsatisfaction, he experienced what the ancients called divine discontent, or, if it were positive, aspiration.

Once, when talking of these things with a friend, an astute but imaginative young person familiar with the ideas and terms of modern psychology, this friend had told him:

"My dear Antrum, you surprise me. No, you annoy me. You are an anachronism. You should have been born, preferably before

Luther, certainly before Watson. Only souls can aspire, and souls belonged to ancient and medieval fools. We've done with them. We've done with terms like 'divine discontent' and 'aspiration'. They still hang on in museums of religion, that is, in churches. But they have no meaning in contemporary life. You know as well as I do that they were used by men who assumed the existence of a 'spirit'. We've done with spirits. Let's have done with their brood of terms. And when you speak of fulfilment and nonfulfilment, you really mean, don't you, adjustment and maladjustment, or something like that?"

And then he had seen a look in Antrum's eyes which made him quickly modify his tone and add: "Well, of course. Perhaps you are not an anachronism. I admit that you know as much of modern thought as I do. Perhaps you merely sound like one because you use archaic words. But why not bring one's vocabulary up to date?"

Antrum had nodded thanks to his cocksure young friend. And then he had started to remind him that, in the first place, a change of terms did not necessarily imply an increased knowledge of reality; that the existence of the body, like the existence of the soul, was a matter of belief, not a matter which men could prove; and that, in the third place, the main ideas, the main attitudes of modern psychology were as ancient as the main ideas and attitudes of religion, both having existed and having been argued by opposing schools of men, to no result, before the Christian era. But, realizing that should he do so, he would not only start a repetition of the futile controversy, but would provide opportunity for his essentially naïve young friend to feel the illusion of a purposive and fruitful contest, he decided, instead, to give Albert a real taste of what he, Albert, believed he believed.

"In truth, dear Albert, wise counsellor and cocksure young man, I should also discard talk of 'alternating phases', 'wishes', and so on. For, when examined, what are these but terms I conveniently give to phenomena I do not understand and which may not exist? These are terms I use to fortify my assumption that the given phenomenon does exist and that I understand it. It is an empty business, dear Albert. I rely on my senses and on my mind, both of which are blind alleys. Yes? I appear to see something. I seem

to think about this something. I assume that I more or less understand it. But, at best, what is it I really do? No more than associate *my* meanings with *my* terms. I assume that I understand the meanings I have given the terms. And then I induce myself to believe that these terms fit objects, or approximate realities, which exist in the objective world, my own organism being part of this objective world.

"It is an empty game we play with ourselves. We put ten pennies in a hat. We turn our heads and say: a hat is that which contains ten pennies. We rediscover the hat, and find that in fact it does contain ten pennies. Hurrah! We understand the hat. Ancient men understood ancient hats. Modern men understand modern hats. If asked: what are ten pennies? We answer: ten pennies are those things which are found in a hat. Sure enough they are just that!

"Much as I understand a hat, I understand myself. Much as I understand myself, I understand you, Albert, other men, Nature, and the Universe. It is a game which appears to work if we do not examine it. If we are critically inclined, we tend to see the other fellow's game. Our own personal game is usually exempt from questioning. How about your terms, Albert?"

"What you say is true enough," Albert had replied, defensively, "but we cannot get along without terms. We've got to have them. And it seems to me that we should prefer the terms of science to the terms of superstition. We've got to be sensible enough not to question them too far. There's a limit to legitimate questioning. If everybody began thinking about the problem of knowledge, the world would stop."

"Would you not like to see it stop?"

"No, why should I?" Albert had asked, with a trace of heat.

"I did not think you would. Motion, motion without result, is necessary in order to feel futility. We do not think of a stone as being futile. Neither would we think of and feel an inert world as futile. You want the world to go on because you like the feeling of futility?"

"I do not *like* the feeling," Albert had denied, angrily. "I simply think that man most often *is* a futile animal."

Antrum's tone had been obviously satirical: "Albert, of course, excepted. Albert, having egotistic pleasure in feeling superior to the poor deluded ones. Albert, the superior futilitarian, pretending to believe that life, his own included, is futile, without meaning or aim, but affirming by his every act that *his* intelligence is the real thing, that *his* pleasure is worth living for."

"All right," Albert had said, with quick reversal, his face suddenly tensed and pained, his tone of voice bitter, reluctant, resentful. "All right. I give in. I too am an ass. My terms are no more true than yours. You've reduced us both to the rank of idiots. Hopeless idiots. What would you have us do, commit suicide?"

Antrum had not answered. He had kept silent for five minutes. Deliberately he had gazed idiotically at Albert for five minutes. For this length of time Albert had been able to endure the look. And then, with a rush of fear and anger, jumping to his feet, he had violently flung a pillow at Antrum's face and bolted from the room, headed for a place where he could get straight whiskey.

From a phase of apparent fulfilment, Antrum was now entering a phase of apparent nonfulfilment. But, emerging from the opposite state, he carried its taste with him some distance into this one, as one carries the experience of day well into the night. Hence he did not become aware of the change at once. Not till its stark purity, more intense and absolute than ever he had known it, indelibly impressed him, did he become fully aware of it.

Two wishes contested in Nathan as to how he would spend the summer. One was a wish for a brilliant experience, with sea, place, swimming, sailing, dancing, motoring, men, women, and conversation all contributing to a season of gaiety and elegance. This wish belonged to that part of Antrum which made him a social human being, one who was strongly drawn towards people and who found joy and value in their company. The other was a wish for comparative solitude, difficult experience, friction, and much work. This wish arose from the part of Antrum that was Ishmael.

There was a third wish: a force impatient with the opposites of human experience, an urge to reconcile these opposites and achieve

one inclusive state of being. In this instance, it was a wish that work and a brilliant life combine and take place more or less at the same time, in the same general circumstance. Antrum affirmed this wish as a driving force. He was positive towards the possibility of its ultimate fulfilment. But he knew that it was not yet able to achieve itself. And so, it kept in the background, but was active.

The contest was clear-cut between the wish for a brilliant experience and the wish for comparative solitude and work.

In his New York skyscraper hotel, which Antrum called a modern monastery, he having one of its stone cells—in the heat of July he watched himself at different times and more often as the date for leaving for somewhere approached, be the battle-ground of this struggle. Detached from it, he understood that it gave rise to one of the tensions of forces which in sum, co-ordinated, he called himself. He had a feeling that outward events, obviously, and inner events, by unseen pressure, would decide the contest in favor of conditions suitable for work. Antrum aimed to place himself on the side of the wish which appeared best to his reason.

The wish for a season of gaiety and elegance gathered images and impressions from his past experience and formed, or tried to form, the picture of a perfect summer resort. A first-rate modern hotel whose rooms were well-proportioned, bright, and airy, whose cuisine was excellent, whose summer occupants were people of good instincts, good training, good sense, and of general culture—in brief, truly interesting and delightful people. He wished to experience the art of human relationships. He desired human adventure. A fine harbor, in the waters of which he could dive and swim. And he wanted a sail-boat, one of those marvelously graceful things with racing lines and silk sails. As a boy he had had one which was then called a knockabout. A tennis court. A dance floor and a good orchestra. And a sufficient number of charming young women who were fine dancers.

Antrum smiled ironically at this picture. For, among other things, he knew that the wish which formed it was an off-shoot of a deeper wish, of a wish which, together with others of like kind, formed the interior base of his idealism. This deeper wish was a wish for the perfect place, the perfect place of dwelling on earth.

Nathan had never seen this perfect place. As with most other imaginative people, the finest spots in America and in Europe which he had visited failed to realize his dream. His mind told him that never on earth would he find it; that if ever he were to have it, he himself must be able to make and build it. Intuitively he knew that his heart compelled him to seek over the face of the earth for a place which doubtless never could be materialized in physical substance. He sensed that the home his heart desired lay elsewhere, perhaps far off somewhere upward from the planet Earth. Yet, knowing this, his wish for the perfect place persistently crept from its deep lodging, entered into his wanderings, and reached out before him with the hope that each new place he went to would be it.

So now, even towards a summer resort, this wish reached out. It sent sightless projections forward, dim senses of soul-light, and hovered questioningly over known and imagined coast places and mountain spots, villages by the sea, towns nestling under brooding hills or near stark peaks.

Antrum thought: All Nature lower than man is in place. All Nature, less than man, and other than the animals which man domesticates, is in place. Eagles have a habitat which suits their nature and allows their nature to fulfil itself. Sea gulls. Likewise the sparrows are at home where they dwell. Panthers in the jungle, and the hordes of tropic beasts. Seals, dolphins, whales, polar bears. All Nature less than man unites in one the beings of Nature and their place; so that, Nature, organic part of the great cosmos, and her beings, are one.

Man alone is dislocated. Lower man dwells in his place with sullen or indolent acceptance, angry and mean, or happy and slothful, according to whether the spot is north or south with scant food hard won or with food in abundance and there for the gathering. Higher man suffers most. He knows with the conviction of his soul that he does not belong. The air, the sea, the continents, his own society, speak his lack of fitness. Each place, and he himself, make his soul dissatisfied and cause it to hunger for the next. Man is a goaded orphan. He is a nerve of the cosmos, dislocated, trying to quiver into place.

Some men try to solve this maladjustment by closing their eyes in the name of naturalism, or what not, and by trying to stick their heads in vegetation. Let's be vegetables! Let's be animals! As if Nature would play make-believe.

Some men invent a mysticism which they hope will bring wholeness, and for which they claim a truth and power greater than that possessed by the kind of mental suggestion which promises to set and heal a fractured bone. As if God would play make-believe.

Others, perhaps less deluded but more drooping, fashion science into gospels of defeat and say authoritatively that the final wisdom is that which enables man to make the best of an irreparably bad job.

Antrum's wish for the perfect place, and for perfect being, outleapt his experience and the ideas of men, and sought fulfilment. The fact that he was going to change place, that he was going to spend the summer in some new spot, allowed it to reach out. Pondering its meaning, with his eyes gazing from a hot body over the roofs of July New York, with himself knowing that New York, one of the few livable places on earth, was an unnatural monster, and that the place he would go to would be a small New York, he shook his head in ironic comment, with sadness. The wish outleapt his irony, outleapt his sadness.

A friend who happened to visit him during this period was shocked and made uneasy by his satire, stimulated by his idealism, and confused when he tried to reconcile the existence of these two extremes in the one man. He wanted Antrum to be either out and out pessimistic, or out and out idealistic. Then he could understand him. He could, he thought, understand a demon, on the one hand, and, on the other, an angel. But to his mind the conditions of life were violated when he saw in the one experience from the one man two extremes of light shining from the same sight-organs.

The presence of Bruce Rolam in York Harbor, and the fact that he wished to see him, were the evident considerations which decided Antrum in favor of this place.

He liked the coast of Maine. Once he had spent a summer in Tennant's Harbor, south of Rockland, where spruce and pine trees

line the rocky coast and show in solid forms of dark green above the cold sea water. Where fog came. Where several old seamen still remained, going fishing or pushing small boats across the harbor—a far reach down from the early days when they commanded three and four mast ships and voyaged all the way from the Bay of Fundy, called by them the home of fog, to the coast towns of the southern Atlantic states, and even as far as Africa. The cemetery in Tennant's Harbor is dominated by the graves of sea captains.

Antrum had once motored through York, and his memory said it was not a brilliant place. There were several Yorks, he remembered. York Harbor, York Beach, York Village, York Cliffs, and perhaps another. His friend Bruce, as he later found out, was located in a spacious house, an inn, on the long grey beach midway between York Harbor, the fashionable place, and York Beach, the summer resort.

He had a definite sense that his decision to spend the month of August in York meant that the wish for a brilliant summer had lost, and that the wish for difficult experience and work had won. He knew, however, that this condition was but the temporary outcome of a temporary victory. From long experience he realized that motor decisions never settle emotional controversies: though his body would move in confirmation of one wish's temporary triumph, his psyche was but taking breath to renew the contest of the same wishes at another time under superficially different external circumstances.

He was less aware that he was passing from a phase of apparent fulfilment to a phase of apparent nonfulfilment.

Whenever he entered an experience, this question, implying an active search, an active scrutiny, an active pondering, preceded the movements of his body:

"What significance does this experience contain for me? What meaning can I derive from it?"

Antrum, a human body, was shot from New York. But he, his slender body showing the strain of heat and work, was fatigued

and somewhat doped by it, and dulled to noise and speed, so that in his own consciousness he seemed to drift northward. He reached Portsmouth, N. H., the end of the train trip, in the afternoon; and there he found his friend Bruce waiting for him. Bruce was of stocky build, with quick movements, and sunny face. His eyes were lively and intelligent. His hands were mobile, well shaped, with sensitive fingers. They did not at once recognize each other. Both were somewhat changed since they had last seen each other. Nathan showed the wear and tear of New York, and looked sharper and older. Bruce showed the wind and sea of Maine, and looked more jovial and younger. Their mutual hesitation, however, was brief; and greetings, warm and spontaneous, were hasty because Nathan's baggage had to be attended to hurriedly else they would miss the motor coach to York. Nathan, sensitive to first impressions, felt a happy lifting, quickly followed by a strange weight.

They did not talk much during the motor trip. The coach was crowded, mostly with women who had come from one or another of the Yorks to Portsmouth for shopping, and who now were returning. Nathan registered the human types about him: several New England spinsters, distinct, quietly superior among the cruder types. His senses received impressions of the country through which they were passing, a country of woods and rolling hills, not particularly Maine, and now and then a house which, if not modern, was New England.

The coach, speeding east and oceanward, passed through York Village, a quiet old place, and then through York Harbor, more summery. As it curved and passed beyond the Harbor to the shore road, Antrum's heart began to sink. For there was the ocean, certainly, a glad sight, with its tireless and ever oncoming waves which broke against occasional rocks and washed the long grey beach. But here also were camps, clusters of one-room shacks grouped about a gasoline station and a hot dog and cold drink stand, camps for auto tourists. Then came a fine open space of fields, woods, and ocean. And then—a line of ugly squat summer cottages jammed as close to the road as they could get, as if deliberately set to make life unlovely and to cramp it to where it could not help but inhale the fumes of exploded gasoline.

The scene struck Nathan, causing him a twinge of hopeless pain. Then came a swift rebellion against this avoidable ugliness; a satiric bitterness; and then a strong thirst for and leap towards an impossible beauty. Bruce sensed Nathan's feelings, and glanced quickly at him. Doubtless he himself had had the same feeling his first visit to York.

Antrum told himself that the place was not as ugly as he felt it to be. But it was at this point that a saying, often forgotten and often remembered during the course of his life, re-entered his mind and began to take on new meanings and wider applications: "In hell we create paradise."

Nathan's eyes swept the entire length of this line of summer cottages, searching for a livable one; and not a single house met his sight but made him hope that place was not the one. He silently hoped, against misgivings, that Bruce would not press the button and stop the coach until they had passed around some curve or over some hill.

Of a sudden, with one of the impulsive movements characteristic of him, Bruce touched the button and stopped the coach. They got off before a house which Nathan had not seen because it lay back from the road. It was a large white house, with a porch around, and quite different from the cottages they had passed. Antrum's first impression was that it rested on a slight rise of ground with self-respect, common sense, and a sort of ample dignity. The green of Nature surrounded it, a well-kept lawn and flower garden. And behind it could be seen a fringe of woods. His spirit took breath and thankfulness.

Heavy with bags they moved up the board-walk and were soon received by The Shawl, to Antrum, as the time went on, a centre of life and of interest.

One of the sons of the house, Charles, met them. On entering the door, he was greeted by Mrs. Shawl, a fine looking woman with a crown of silvery hair. She had read and liked one of his books, he knew. And now he felt her welcome to him personally.

Once in his room, with Bruce helping him make a hasty settlement, the first question he asked was:

"Who is here of interest?" His tone of voice conveyed that he felt the adventure of being in a new house.

Bruce looked undecided, as he often did when asked a question. Then, after a slight pause, with characteristic directness and rapidity he answered: "They come and go. But there is Miss Oliver, Mrs. Shawl's assistant. And you'll find Mrs. Shawl interesting to talk with."

The matter was not pursued further because Bruce then suggested that they go for a plunge in the ocean. He asked Nathan if he had brought a suit. He himself went in each day around four o'clock. They would have tea in Nathan's room after they came out.

Antrum tipped his head to one side, doubt in his eyes. For he knew that the sun was slanting far down a grey day and that the waters along the Maine coast, even in August, were cold. He had just come from the heat of New York. The trip had been hot and tiring. He wanted to be in condition to start writing the next morning. But, in a mild way, it was a game proposition. His body began anticipating the cold shock. A positive response arose. With zest he said yes.

The water was cold. Bruce sported in it like a young male dolphin. As one seasoned to it, he laughed at Nathan's shouts when the cold struck him where it was most cold. Antrum plunged under a high wave and began stretching himself in one of the strokes, a crawl, he had learned as a youth, at which time he was an expert swimmer. Now, he was decidedly off-form. But for a short while he enjoyed the water. Soon, however, he felt himself contracting and about to shiver; so he went out, hurriedly, telling Bruce that he would wait for him on the beach.

Nathan wished there was whiskey. After tea, Bruce went to his room to write letters, and Antrum, wondering who of interest he was going to meet, took from his bags and arranged about the room the necessary articles of use. His nerves still tingled with the shock of the cold water. In New York, he had wished he could get cold. Now, in York, he wished he could get hot. He was still uncomfortably contracted. But even so, he was much energized; and therefore glad that he had gone in. He had a happy sense that his vacation was well started.

It was not long before Bruce entered saying it was almost time for dinner. So, dressed informally for the evening, they went down to the main floor. There, in the hallway, at her desk, was Miss Oliver. She gaily arose when she saw them coming. Bruce introduced Nathan to her. A bit of pleasantry was exchanged, and then the two men entered the room where, off to himself, Bruce had his meals.

Antrum recognized that his perceptions of Miss Oliver had been perceptions of her character. Save that her bearing was upright and striking, he had no clear picture of her appearance. But he had a definite impression that she was a young woman of considerable ability, and something of a law unto herself. She was, perhaps, of an active type which makes social contacts with ease, but finds it difficult to be inwardly intimate. She had quality, and was, obviously, in the class of superior human beings. Interested in her, when the opportunity offered he asked Bruce about her and thus added to the impressions which his mind worked over.

The room they dined in connected with the family dining-room but was separated by a hall from the main guest room. Bruce had wished this room for his own, and Mrs. Shawl had given it to him so that he would be spared the necessity of mingling and talking with people when he was not in the mood for it. From this circumstance, and from other happenings in the course of the next few days, Antrum soon formed the opinion that Mrs. Shawl not only had a real liking and appreciation of literature but that she valued its creators. He wanted to know more about her; and gradually he became interested in the Shawl family.

The room itself, like all the rooms in the house, had a high ceiling and gave a sense of space. In one corner was an open hearth. Two windows opened on different sides of the porch; one, a large plate glass, before which their table, set for two, was placed. Through it the ocean could be seen. Behind Nathan's chair, on a small table, there was a row of books, one by Bruce, and most of them by modern authors.

As Bruce had written in his letters, the food was excellent, of first-rate quality and very well prepared. Unlike the many flat tasteless concoctions of old meat and canned vegetables thrown together

and eaten merely because they fill, this meal was a blend of vital articles which made one glad to eat. Nathan learned that the cook, supervised by Mrs. Shawl, was a Philippino. And so was their waiter, a rapidly moving, quiet, gentle young fellow who smiled often and seemed to find humor in his service.

During the dinner the two men talked more or less at random of New York, literature, happenings in the literary world, personalities, and of their own recent and near future works. And while the conversation went on, they were really moving closer to each other, feeling for, touching and finding the inner base of their friendship. This movement of talk and contact continued, deepening.

Among other things, Nathan mentioned that he had written ahead reserving a room at a hotel in York Beach, and that he would like to go up there the next day, look around, and confirm his reservation. To this Bruce agreed, but restated his wish that Nathan remain at The Shawl as his guest for a few more days. Nathan said that he would be glad to. He explained, however, that he wanted to get settled as soon as possible; and then went on to tell why he preferred having room and meals separate, as he would have them in the hotel selected at York Beach where no meals were served.

There was for him, he said, a temptation to over-eat while at the seashore if much good food were regularly placed before him, and if, for some reason or other, he found it difficult to work. He might find it difficult to work at first because the sea air for the first week had a tendency to let him down. It braced and energized his body, but tended to 'wet' his psyche and loosen its tension far below the degree necessary for productive work. In such a state, it was very easy to over-eat and rapidly grow heavier. The more you ate, the less you could do. The less you could do, the more you ate. Until, finally, you just sat around, tugged and strained to no effect, overfed, but with nothing on your mind save impatience to eat the next meal. Such a thing had once happened to him—a period of sluggish torture. He did not wish to repeat the experience.

It was decided that they would pay a visit to York Beach, which Bruce said was lively and with its share of "natural selection" going on, some time during the afternoon of the following day.

In his bed that night, Antrum asked himself how he was going to like York. The Shawl, yes. But a picture of the line of ugly summer cottages flashed on his mind, and he had to remind himself that he had come to York, not for a brilliant life, but for work and because he wanted to be with Bruce. When this point was established for the time being, he turned his mind to recalling and pondering the events of the day.

First of all, he saw himself, in the period of a day, removed from New York and its conditions to York Beach. Last night, he had slept in a bed in a room high up in a New York hotel. He had gone to bed late, his mind actively thinking. Sounds of infrequent trucks and motor-cars far down on the street had come up to him. A lone horse clip-clopping. A clock striking three, sending its tones over a small space of nocturnal New York. A man and woman in a street brawl, like cats, their raucous high-pitched voices carrying upwards as through a silent corridor. Someone in a room, how far off or where he could not tell, screaming intermittently because of physical pain: perhaps a woman in child-birth, perhaps someone who would be taken the next day to a hospital for an operation. The whistle of a boat on the Hudson River, a sound throaty and deep which made Nathan think it must be an ocean liner, though it was an odd hour for a steamer to be either leaving or entering port. Antrum's mind had crossed the Atlantic and thought of a friend in London, of life in Paris, of southern France. Well, he was going to York. He had felt the contest of his wishes start up. He had placed his mind on the outline of his next book, and had tried to judge the fitness of the place given its various parts. His mind had swung off and begun working too feverishly on the matter of culture in America. He had gone to sleep with his question:

"What is waiting for me in York? What meaning?"

And the answer: "Doubtless I shall know a month or a year after it has happened to me."

Now, after a series of events, a train trip, a motor ride, few of them outstanding, but not one which he could have foreseen—even in routine existence he could not see, not actually see the step ahead of him: all events, great and small, were unknown; and therefore, the intelligent man had to develop towards life an experimental atti-

tude—he listened with amazement to people telling calmly and with certainty what they were going to do next week, next month, next year . . . now, he lay on a bed in a room on the coast of Maine. The room was in a house. Other people. . . . People, in a profound sense, strangers. Fellow visitors on the planet Earth. They too, for a short while, saw the stars and ocean. They too for a short while took food, worked, loved, and reproduced their kind. The house was on earth. The earth was in the universe. Soon he would die. An end to the modes of perception called Nathan Antrum. He could hear the sounds of waves breaking on the beach. The air he breathed was moist and salty. It was early, not more than eleven o'clock. His mind wanted to sleep. Yes, perhaps the train trip and the plunge in the ocean had started a physical cycle. His body felt strong. His mind was drowsy. But he held it for a short while on Bruce.

He re-affirmed his conviction that few men in America contained the varied vivid materials of culture as Bruce did. Bruce's senses were alive to the sensuous world. He was intuitive, often penetrating and accurate. He felt life, its comedy and pathos, its joy and tragedy. He made perceptions which he thought about. Bruce used his mind. He was trying to build sincere and solid human structures. His quick intelligence was familiar with many of the best products of western civilization. Bruce was a living being, and a clean man. His temperament was vital, impulsive, sunny, generous. He was jolly, a person to have a good time with. He had strange fears, doubts, confusions, odd reservations and unwillingnesses. But he was a man of the present and of the future, one of the builders of America. Antrum felt a renewed appreciation of and affection for him. "Yes, Bruce!" he said. And then he told himself that though he had seen many of his manifestations, Bruce's basic motives, his essential pattern, his dominant problems, faiths and doubts, were things unknown to him. Sleep stole over his greater interest in, his increased wish to understand his friend Bruce.

CHAPTER II

Next morning after breakfast he sat on the porch with Bruce for a short while, and then they both retired to their rooms to work.

Antrum had purposely begun a short essay before leaving New York, his idea being that with a small form already under way, the disturbance caused by a change of place would not be so great but what he could enter this form immediately on arriving at York, carry it through, and, in the process of doing so, prepare and condition himself for undertaking a more difficult work.

His idea, he granted, had been good. But now as he leaned back in his chair, re-read the pages he had written, and tried to establish a vital contact with the article, he felt alien to and removed from its contents, unable to make its form move. With much effort he managed to write several paragraphs which were, he knew, fair in themselves, but which had no relation to the form of the essay. So, growing skeptical of his present state, wondering what the change to Maine was really going to do to him, recognizing that his over-concern was symptomatic of a fatigued condition, but determined to push through and on despite resistance, he put pen and paper aside, lit a cigarette, and composed himself to the task of thinking anew into the material which, in New York, had appeared quite clear and vivid to his mind.

He found that his thoughts refused to move. The more he tried to force his mind the duller it became. The duller his mind became, the sharper grew the lines of his face. His chest tended to curve in. Still, he held at it. Had someone looked in the door, he would have thought that Antrum was in very intense concentration. He himself looked in the door at Antrum sitting there, and gave a laugh at the lie of his posture. He was indeed, posturing, not functioning. Thinkers and writers and artists were strange creatures behind closed doors. It was well that naïve eyes never had a chance to peep through key-holes at the world's great ones. After another lengthy trial and failure, he resigned himself to the comparatively honest occupation of reading a book till lunch time.

When he met Bruce, he was cool and pleasant outside, showing

no trace of his morning's struggle. Inside, he was impatient to get settled in the hotel at York Beach.

He looked at Bruce as they had lunch and wondered what difficulties with ideas and words he had had that morning.

Later, they started for York Beach, a walk of about two miles. The tide was out. Bruce led the way along the long grey beach.

Bruce was free to respond to the ocean, to the sky and clouds, the various hues on the water, and to the joy of moving his body through an off-sea wind and over the smooth hard-packed wet sand.

The mingled odors of beached seaweed and of drift wood, odors which had come to his senses during a glorious period of Antrum's boyhood, became taste in his mouth and started a joyous voice of long ago. In his heart an image moved, the picture of a slender lovely girl-child who had shown surprising trust and courage through a gale, in an open boat, with sails straining and boom jibbing, he the youthful skipper at the tiller. To some place in life, his lips opened to an instant feeling and formed the word and sent it winging: "Beautiful." And in tenderness he added, "my dear."

But his eyes were searching to find where among this line of ugly summer cottages was his hotel.

At one place, in order to avoid a stream of water which came from the land, they found it necessary to gain the shore road and walk along it for a bit. Antrum came face to face with these summer shacks and their inhabitants.

Weather-beaten greys and yellows, the cottages, a long unbroken line of them, were on him once he touched the road. He looked people on the porches in the face. Almost in one step he could have passed from the oily road onto their front porches. There were so many cars speeding up and down that it was impossible to walk along the road. And so close were the cottages to the road that the foot-path in front of them was not more than a yard wide. If he stepped from the path to the right, he was on the road. If to the left he would have been in someone's house.

In this manner people from the cities spent their vacations, he reflected. In the cities they were jammed, and their habits forbade them to use the country. With the ocean before them, and the entire

state of Maine behind them, with open fields and woods extending for miles all around, they crouched, elbowed, and pinched life one yard removed from the motor-road. They were like a line of cars in the subway. They dominated the scene, threw a pall of dreary vulgarity over the country-side, and, by their assertiveness, compelled one to forget the presence of the ocean and of the high arching sky.

Antrum felt like knocking them back with one liberating gesture.

As he walked past cottage after cottage he observed the people sitting on the porches or passing in bathing suits of loud colors from them to the beach. They were, evidently, a low type of city folk. The younger people had a certain bloom of flesh. Their skins were smooth and tan because of the winds and sun. The older ones were thick-boned, heavy of body, with strange hard eyes set in dull bloodless faces. The young folks were waiting to live. The old folks were waiting to die. Here was a segment of the great lower middle class, the rock-bottom of America.

They ate, they loafed, they talked a little, they slept, they woke up and got up, they went in bathing, they jumped in and out of motor-cars. They indulged, as Bruce would say, in natural selection, procreating new organism for Nature and new citizens for the world's greatest commonwealth. Now and again one of them would pay five dollars to be taken for a fifteen minute ride in an airplane whose station, for the summer, was on the beach. And then, their summer vacation over, they would return to the industrial and commercial cities of New England, cities which knew all about the presidential candidates, but did not know that Emerson and Thoreau had ever lived.

Antrum told himself that a different toss of the dice might have made him one of them. He began pondering what difference in meaning there was between himself and these shore-dwellers.

They were approaching an arm of land which curved out into the ocean. Antrum noticed that the houses on it looked more livable, and hoped that his hotel was near the point.

And then he realized that the place was gradually depressing him. But why? he asked. Why was he identifying with these people and their houses? What made him accept it as a settled fact that he was going to spend a month in York? Theoretically, he was free

to turn about at once and leave it. He had not pledged himself to remain. Bruce would understand. The motor coaches and railroads were still running. There were hundreds of towns farther up the coast, if he wished to be in Maine. There were places in New Hampshire and Vermont. There were sailings each week to Europe. Why York? Of all places, why York?

Bruce was leading the way along a road which cut across the arm of land. They ascended a rise of ground, and, after following several turnings, there, on the other side, was the village of York Beach.

The first building seen was a large yellow-brown affair, like a huge packing box, which Antrum took to be a hotel. Its back was towards him. To either side he could see patches of the ocean. It must be called, he thought, "Ocean View." Bruce mentioned, with a grimace, that it was typical of the large cheaper hotels at Maine summer resorts. To Antrum it appeared as a number of the shore cottages bunched into one. It gave him a similar feeling of distaste.

But, on entering the village itself, a different scene presented itself. Along the streets the buildings were newer, and a sufficient number of them were fresh painted white, so that, in the brilliant afternoon sunlight, it had a clean if cheap liveliness which made it in all ways preferable to the line of shacks they had passed. Cars ranging from Fords and Chevrolets to Packards and Cadillacs were parked along the curbs and passing back and forth. And people, some of them in colorful summer attire, were moving with the animation of visitors and of summer business in a small sea-side town.

Lines of electric bulbs were swung across the streets. Antrum guessed that at night their lights would make York Beach bright, and, in a manner, festive.

It was, evidently, of the summer resort type which tries in a limited way to provide the sort of things popular in Coney Island and Atlantic City. There was a casino; a carousel; a movie; a store with large plate glass windows through which one could see a machine pulling chewing candy, kisses; several stands for hot dogs; one or two novelty shops; restaurants which advertised shore dinners; and a Great White Way. The season was at its height.

As they walked through its streets and Antrum compared the liveliness of the town with the dullness of the summer cottages lined along the shore road, the idea again came to him that Americans are animate only when they are making or spending money. This place, like all the towns and cities of America which show evident signs of life, was not a summer resort, much less was it a place of living; it was, like Coney Island, Atlantic City, Palm Beach, New York and Chicago, a money-resort. The life of the people consisted in exchanging money. Let the exchange stop, and they would stop living.

He had a sharp sense of how York Beach would appear when the season ended.

Antrum saw himself spending the summer in this place; and he turned to Bruce. "You were right," he said. "No better place for work."

Bruce nodded quickly and smiled. "Nothing else to do," he confirmed. "Work, and bathing, sleep, and good food—unless you like ice-cream sodas and the movies." There was a playful question in his tone of voice. But his body, spurred by feelings of how alien he was in York Beach, moved faster through its streets.

A sign showed them the direction of Antrum's hotel; and before long they found themselves looking at two grey painted wood-buildings which bore the name:The Halsey. To one side of The Halsey, between it and the house next door, a path led towards the ocean. Antrum suggested that before going in the hotel office they walk and see what kind of location the hotel had.

Emerging from the path they were greeted by a view which made them realize that they were indeed on the coast of Maine. The village of York Beach receded and was forgotten.

They were on a promontory. At their feet were the marvelous rock formations of the coast. The ocean, deep blue and glittering, spread out before them. And over the way, the projecting arm of land which they had crossed, formed a sort of cape, a horse-shoe shaped coast line, the harbor about which the houses of York Beach clustered. At a fair remove, people were in bathing. The joyous sounds of their voices as they sported in waves, laughs, playful screams, the kinds of sound which the surf invariably evokes, came

to them. The front rooms of the hotel, and its two porches, one at the first and one at the second story, looked full on this scene. Antrum saw at a glance that The Halsey had the best location in York Beach.

After sunning on the rocks a while, they went to the office, and there Antrum met the proprietor, who he immediately liked. The owner was a middle-aged man, rather slow in speech and movements, and with a kindly, open, smiling face. He took Antrum to show him the room which had been reserved for him, telling on the way, that it faced the ocean.

On the second floor front his key unlocked a door, and Antrum entered a room which tried to reject him. His heart sank. It was, true enough, a front room. And it was a clean room. But, in the first place, its three windows, instead of overlooking the water, opened straight out on the second story porch. Not only could he overhear, but he could not escape hearing the conversation of the women who occupied the rocking chairs. They were right on him. The room itself, for Antrum, a tall man, was small and cramped; and, for a third unwanted feature, the door between this room and the next was so thin that he could distinctly hear the movements of the next room's occupants. He sensed in a flash that he would not have even moderate privacy, much less true quiet and solitude. In effect, the room was much like a small stuffy interior cabin on an out of date ocean liner.

His question to the proprietor brought the reply that there was not another vacant room in the house. And then a strange thing happened.

A compelling force which urged him to take it. He had a sharp sense, and a weighty feeling. that the line of his fate was leading, had led him, straight into this room. This slight incident, a matter of a room, served to give him an unusually vivid experience of fatality. He felt and knew that he could not escape his pattern. Though he resisted, he knew without doubt that the room was his. Being told, as a selling point, that a lady minister had previously occupied it, made him smile. But he responded to the information that there was a large corner room on the third floor which would be vacated within a week, at which time, if he wished, he could

move into it. He followed his prospective landlord to this upper room.

It was what Antrum wished. A corner room, large, airy, sunny, with open hearth, it had two front windows which looked, not upon a porch, but on the ocean and the cape—a really wonderful view; and a side window through which, in the distance, he could see small figures in the surf and sunning on the beach. Had it been empty, he would have moved into it at once. The prospect of it being soon vacated weighed in favor of his temporarily taking the room below. This was, he knew, the busy season. The chances were that he would not be able to find in any of the other hotels a better place. Besides, The Halsey had just the right location. And so, determined to make the best of the room downstairs, he took it with the understanding that he would have the upper room within a week. Then he rejoined Bruce, put on a good face about his new quarters, and together they left York Beach and returned to The Shawl. He was not to occupy his new place until the following afternoon.

That evening after dinner Miss Oliver, gay and lovely in a soft summer dress, entered their room and remained to chat with the two men for a short while. Antrum had opportunity to take additional impressions of her. Words passed easily between the three of them: opinions and feelings of past and present experiences with summer places, swimming, and, of special interest to Antrum, opinions given by Miss Oliver as to the difficulties and amusements of running a summer inn. Before long, however, saying with a smile that she hoped she had not delayed a serious literary conversation, she arose and went to finish her duties for that day.

"An exceedingly well set up young woman," Antrum commented.

Bruce nodded agreement, and added: "She walks as though she has a good sense of herself."

"Quite so," said Nathan. "When she enters or leaves a room, when she is present, you know you are dealing with a real person. I wonder how old she is?"

"In her early twenties," Bruce answered, noting Nathan's growing interest, and smiling inwardly as he saw the two of them poten-

tial rivals. "An interesting personality," he continued impersonally. "In some ways she is very young, a young girl, a child, naïve, quite innocent, though she likes to play sophisticated. And then again, she is mature. She is more mature than most of the men she will meet. As so often happens with women like her, she'll probably marry an inferior man, and dissipate herself ruling and mothering him."

Nathan gave a grunt. They lapsed into silence, each concerned with his own unexpressed thoughts. They lit cigarettes, and, from time to time, glanced out the door of their room to see who was passing through the hall. The evening had grown chilly. A woman whom Nathan saw dressed in a fur lined white coat, was, he learned from Bruce, from Chicago. Nathan was interested in people from Chicago. With her children and a maid she was occupying a cottage which belonged to the inn. This was her second summer at Long Beach.

Impulsively, Bruce began discussion of a subject he had been thinking into. Going directly to the point, he said:

"I'd like your ideas, Nathan, on what an individual is. I'm working at something which will have to show the difference between the herd and an individual, and I'm not sure that I know what either of them is."

Before Nathan tried to formulate his ideas, he made the perception, with a feeling of comradeship, that he and Bruce, different in their approaches to the world though they were, Bruce being located mostly in his feelings and senses and primarily meeting life with his emotional intelligence, he being located for the most part in his mind and primarily meeting life with his mental intelligence, not only had intuitions of life in common, a fact he had noted before, but that they both, at this point of their careers, recognized the problem of the individual and saw the necessity of trying to clarify their understanding of it.

"As a general definition, I might say that an individual is one who, centred in himself, located in his own centre of gravity, is more or less able to control his own functions. In contrast to a collective person whose centre of gravity is outside himself, located

in the mass, and whose functions are controlled or manipulated by suggestion, by mass suggestion."

Bruce did not like the idea of control, that an individual controlled himself. To him, it had undesirable "mental control" connotations. It meant that the person who exercised it was trying, in effect, to deny his emotions and cut himself off from life. He told Nathan this, and expressed his view that the individual, while remaining himself, must at the same time enter in and be part of the great stream of things. Nathan answered that he thought an individual must in truth be in and part of life. But the question was: part of what life? There were all kinds of life. Stupid life, diseased life, insane life, intelligent life, and so on. Selection, therefore, was necessary. And it was precisely this ability to make intelligent selections, which, among other things, characterized an individual. To which Bruce agreed.

As for control, Nathan explained that he meant not mental control, not cutting off, but the control of an intelligent will resulting in perfected functioning. A control of one's organism similar to that exercised by a skilled mechanic over his machine.

"It seems to me," Nathan concluded, "that not only the individual but society in general should aim to attain and establish such control. Otherwise. . . . Well, look at us. Individuals, that is, this person, that person, tearing themselves and being torn to pieces. They misuse themselves and are misused. Likewise, nations, and civilizations. In so far as it is a matter of working properly, machines are superior to human beings. Perhaps this is one reason why machines are, as it were, dominating us. We apply to machines what we do not apply to ourselves."

They were thoughtfully silent for a while, and then Bruce asked: "Do you think an individual is independent of the herd?"

"No, I do not, not entirely. Doubtless no person escapes, or can completely transcend being the mechanical, organic and psychological, product of his parents, of his local environment, of his age in general with its dominant forms and forces. We probably exist within mankind as a cell exists within our bodies. What affects a skin cell is likely to affect a brain cell. Each part acts in all acts

of the whole. But at the same time I think there are human beings who exist in a state of comparative independence. I am certain that there are men who, in comparison with the mass of men, can be said to think for themselves, feel for themselves, and act for themselves. They have more or less individualizd the materials of their experience: they have digested, assimilated, and crystallized them, and are able to give them forth, plus some unique contribution from themselves, to their world-era. They are able to create forms. They tend to move by inner initiative. They are active agents rather than passive particles. Individuals are force—"

"Yes," said Bruce, "individuals are force, in contast to the inertia of the mass. I have thought of the herd in terms of inertia. It seems to me that it is inertia. But I sometimes doubt I wonder if there is such a thing as the herd. Some people, you know, say there is not. And after all, life is divided by *our* minds. I mean, it is our mind, human minds, which divide life. Life is one great something, and all living creatures are integral parts of it. How do we know we are not falsifying reality when we allow mental categories to split it up?"

"Doubtless we are" said Nathan "But now, you are questioning man's mode of perception, mode of thought, and asking how we know anything." He shrugged his shoulders, but was seriously concerned. "I have a notion that, fundamentally, that is, in terms of objective reality, we, men, are consistently wrong. Our arts, religions, sciences, and philosophies are probably no more than records of how the world *appears* to some men. Personally, I have no means of knowing truth from fiction—that is, fundamentally. I have no means of proof one way or the other. Not one of us has a proof of proof. Nevertheless, there is such a thing as personal knowledge. And too, such as they are, our senses, feelings, and intellect are, we may assume, we have to assume, instruments of knowledge. My own tell me that there is such a thing as collective man, and that there is such a thing as an individual. And I think I can make workable distinctions between the two. What more, I do not know. Yes, I can, perhaps, present these distinctions in a way so that whoever has already somewhat experienced them, will more or less understand what I mean. I assume that men have certain fundamental

experiences and understandings in common. I assume that men can and do communicate with each other. I take this assumed fact to be a fact in truth, and I see this fact as one of the few real bases of real hope. It means that there is such a thing as objectivity. It may mean that this objectivity is intelligible to man."

"Yes," Bruce nodded, "I suppose so. But what—"

"If, for instance," Nathan continued, "you and I view the psychology of the coming presidential election, I think we will agree that it is a collective psychology. Without reflection, without individual thinking, people all over the country are now divided into two opposing camps. Some are for candidate A and against candidate B. Some are for candidate B and against candidate A. The ones who are for A, respond to an image, a symbol, which, in general outline, is identical for all of them. They respond mechanically. The same holds true of those who are for B. People in favor of A, irrespective of the class to which they belong, irrespective of the section of the country they inhabit, have the same 'reasons' for supporting him; they hold in common identical opinions for opposing B. Listen to people talk for A and against B, and you will hear them voice the same opinions, the same likes and dislikes, the same preferences and prejudices, whether they live in Maine, in Boston, New York, Chicago, or San Francisco. I have done so, and it is my testimony that in the majority of people I have observed no sign of individual thought. Therefore I take the phenomenon to be an instance of mass psychology. The phenomenon exists. What descriptive term we use for it is comparatively unimportant. Yes?"

"I suppose so," said Bruce. And then he asked: "And how did you define an individual?"

"One who can fulfil Leonardo da Vinci's precept: 'Let thine every work be a new phenomenon in Nature.' One who can contribute to his environment, not merely mirror it. Or, to put it in terms I use quite often, one who is, not conformative, but formative."

"What is it, what is the source from which an individual contributes something new to this environment? Where does this new thing come from?" asked Bruce.

"From the essence of that person."

"Have all people this essence, or only some?"

"All people, or, most people, I think," Nathan answered.

"Then why—" Bruce began.

"Because of difference in strength, difference in availability, difference in development, difference in the circumstances encountered—"

Bruce asked: "Do you think the time will come when all people will be individualized?"

"I don't know, Bruce. I have two sets of opinions on that question; and I have no means of ascertaining which of them is nearer true. One set says, yes, in time, all men will recognize the need, and will become individuals. The other set says that this is not necessary, but that, on the contrary, there will always be the two kinds of men. Perhaps one of the main tensions in mankind is created by just this opposition, not conflict, between individuals and the mass. The mass realizes itself, that is, is able to fulfill its function, because, among other things, there are individuals. Individuals realize themselves, are able to fulfil their functions, because, among other things, there is the mass. Perhaps this is so, and must be so always."

"Do you think that those who are potential individuals must become realized individuals, that is, that unless they do develop themselves, they will fail in life? They will fail, fail inwardly, no matter what their apparent success?"

"Decidedly," said Nathan. "And as I think you know, it is one of my aims, one of my main aims, to understand how this necessary making of an individual is accomplished."

"Who would you give as instances, who do you think have achieved individuality?"

"Leonardo da Vinci."

"Goethe is the one I think of," said Bruce. "But have you never found that in talking with people they criticize you for referring to what they call stock examples?"

"And thereby disclose the fact that they are not really interested," said Nathan. "Any example is fresh provided you give it real content."

During the long and pensive silence that followed, the woman from Chicago, Mrs. Galt, came quietly to the door, looked in,

and, after deciding that she was not interrupting a discussion, asked Bruce, Mr. Rolam, as she called him, if he and his friend would not like to join herself and two others in the room across the hall. She said that she and they had been trying to amuse themselves with three-hand bridge, and had had poor results. She also remarked that she asked them, Bruce and Nathan, despite the fact that she felt they would not find the company interesting.

Bruce introduced Nathan to Mrs. Galt, a stocky but well shaped woman whose hair was just turning. Her cheeks had a natural out-door flush. She could talk continuously, somewhat to Bruce's irritation. He was not over-willing to join her party. However, he questioned Nathan's eyes. Antrum said yes; and so, the three of them moved towards the other room.

There the two men saw a young married couple seated before a card table. They were people of fair middle class birth and training, soft spoken, conventional, unimaginative. They tried to be pleasant. She was; he wasn't. Introductions were passed around, and then Mrs. Galt informed the couple that though Mr. Rolam, a famous American literary figure, was in "retreat" at Long Beach and did not like to be disturbed, he had gallantly consented to be with them this evening. Antrum could see that Mrs. Galt's respect for Bruce was not unmingled with a wish to tease him. He could also see that Bruce, inwardly, was not pleased with the situation. In truth, Mrs. Galt got under his skin.

A rather lively repartee started, Bruce against Mrs. Galt, and had the effect of rousing everyone. When this subsided, as it did when Bruce withdrew his sharp remarks, polite conversation began. It was dominated by Mrs. Galt who always managed to lead it from impersonal subjects such as politics—the young man was for candidate B, in the most approved manner—back to the personal subject of herself. She talked much about herself, about her children, her babies, domestic problems, and personal difficulties.

Just as she was beginning to tell of an unfortunate friend of hers, an acquaintance who, without thought or consideration, had placed her troubles on her, Mrs. Galt's, shoulders, Miss Oliver, just returned from a walk on the beach, came in and joined them.

She also wore a white coat with fur collar, and looked quite

stunning. It was open now and showed a silk dress of smart design which neatly fitted the forms of her body. Her eyes sparkled. Her cheeks were flushed. Her voice rang cheerily.

"Don't let me interrupt," she said.

Antrum was about to tell her that charm could never interrupt, that it was the nature of charm to add delight to all experience. Her presence placed him in a mood not only to appreciate quality, but to flirt a bit. But he hesitated, and heard someone else assure Miss Oliver that with her present the party was complete.

And then Mrs. Galt continued and finished telling about her pathological friend. Bruce grimaced. On a certain point, namely, on the question of what to do with and for people who were in bad states and who were seemingly unable to do more than hang on the necks of their friends, she desired advice and turned to Bruce for it. Perhaps for advice, perhaps for sympathy or for appreciation of the way in which she had handled a difficult case. Bruce, wishing to see how Nathan would handle the present difficult case, referred her to him. "Ask Mr. Antrum," Bruce told Mrs. Galt. His eyes twinkled mischievously. "Ask Mr. Antrum. He is a psychologist."

"Are you?" Mrs. Galt pounced on Nathan. "Are you? A psychoanalyst?"

Several pairs of eyes looked to ask Antrum if in truth he were. And then, without giving him time to say yes or no, Mrs. Galt pursued him: "I wish you'd tell me something about myself."

Bruce giggled.

"Are you a psychologist, Mr. Antrum?" asked Miss Oliver, seriously interested, pressing her question deeper than Mrs. Galt's.

"Perhaps, of a kind," he answered her.

"I wish you would tell me about myself," said Miss Oliver.

"I wish he would tell us about all ourselves," said the young married woman, as a matter which the conventions demanded she enter. Bruce laughed. Chuckled.

"Sure," he urged, "a round table, with Mr. Antrum as Socrates, or, if you prefer, as Freud, or Jung, or Adler."

Antrum was looking with a level gaze at Miss Oliver. He did not reply to her, however. And she could not tell whether his look

meant that he did not want to, or did not think she was seriously interested, or was weighing the matter, or what.

Antrum's silence caused the subject to be dropped. Mrs. Galt, far from frustrated volubly led the talk into other channels. Bruce had had his laugh, and was in good spirits for the rest of the time.

Then, growing sleepy, they said goodnight.

Once again in darkness, lying on a soft mattress, aware of the moist sea air he breathed, Antrum thought of Miss Oliver, Alma Oliver. He knew that she was beginning to call forth something from him, and wondered what would be its nature. Her question, risking cancelation in an atmosphere of chatter, had carried to him its note of sincere interest. Yes, he would answer her. He wondered how much and what she wanted to know. How much she could bear. Knowing that most people's wishes for understanding, and capacity to bear it, were limited, he questioned what were her limits. Some people, even intelligent people, he knew, measured their information according to what they considered they could afford to know. Many people were quite aware, or believed they were, that, given their position in society, if they wished to keep it comfortably, there was only so much and no more they could afford to understand. Some others, not sensing the risks of knowledge, deluded themselves with the belief that they wished to know everything. Then there were others who sincerely wished to understand, but were limited in capacity. And still others, a few, who had experienced the limits of how much they dared and could bear to know.

There was no doubt that Alma was drawing something from him.

Then his mind began running over the discussion he had had with Bruce on the subject of individuality. In time, an idea took form in words.

"The only man who can leave the earth to other men is he who has won it for himself."

For some while longer he pondered the meaning of this formulation.

CHAPTER III

The following morning Antrum had a repetition of difficulty with work. His general state was similar to that of the day before. He felt in excellent shape, physically and psychologically, but things refused to move. He felt an increased contact with this new world at York; a decreased contact with his own individual world. People and events in York, York impressions, York rhythms, had entered and were active in him; he himself was comparatively inactive. He felt himself losing his customary sense of self. Nathan Antrum was incorporating a new form, and therefore, for the time being, giving way to it. And though, since he did not wish it so, he thrust it from consciousness, he had a definite sense that the days ahead were going to intensify this condition.

True, he managed to write one page which belonged to the form of his article; but, when judged by the way he wrote when really functioning, this was nothing; and the very manner in which it came out let him know that it was a forced product. The energy consumed in writing it was sufficient for ten pages. He knew he would not continue working, trying to work, on the basis of such wasteful practice. He felt half inclined to believe that after all perhaps he needed a few days of comparative loafing. Nevertheless, since he was reluctant to give up an undertaking once his jaws were closed on it, he spent the morning appearing adequate but inwardly struggling with himself and carrying on a losing fight. He told himself that the fact that he was going to move to a new place in the afternoon doubtless had something to do with his condition. Once settled in his new place, things would go better.

Later on when the two men were together, it was arranged that Nathan each evening would come to The Shawl and have dinner with Bruce; and, the afternoons he felt like it, he was to come to Long Beach for bathing. In this way they planned to be as much together as they would have been had Nathan remained at the inn.

Looking at the bus schedule, they saw that there were buses leaving York Beach at 5:00 and 7:00 P.M., either of which Nathan could use for coming, and one at 10:30 leaving Long Beach which would get him back to York Beach fifteen minutes later.

Then Charles Shawl kindly placed his car at Antrum's disposal, and offered to drive him to his hotel at whatever time he said.

So, in mid-afternoon, with Antrum's baggage on board, they made a speedy trip to York Beach.

The business of getting settled in his new place occupied Antrum and prevented him from having marked reactions to the room. He heard women on the porch talking, and knew that they heard him stirring about; but did not particularly mind it. By the time he had written several letters telling friends where he was, he had to dress in a hurry and run to catch the seven o'clock bus.

Bruce told Nathan that the water had been fine, that he was sorry he had missed it. Nathan told Bruce that he rather liked his new place and was going to have an interesting time seeing what he could do in the way of work, for the next week, with people pressing close to him.

Antrum felt an animal gratefulness for the good dinner.

"By the way," he said to Bruce, "you came near putting me in hot water last night."

"You!" exclaimed Bruce, and burst out laughing. "You? In hot water? I wish I had. No chance. She didn't even ruffle you. I don't know why, but she gets under my skin—and knows she does."

"Which she?" asked Nathan.

"Is that a question, or do you want to start talking of Alma?"

"I wouldn't mind," said Nathan. "Where is she? I haven't seen her tonight. You have all day, you know."

"I do not. We both have business."

"Yes, together. How long have you been here?"

"There she goes now," said Bruce, as Alma passed the door and went out on the porch. "Shall we sit in here, or—"

"Let's," said Nathan.

"Which?" asked Bruce.

"Not sit here."

It was a fine night, clear and starry. A soft wind, carrying less of the sea, more of summer growing things, fields and gardens, invited them to breathe its fragrance. On one side of the shadowy

porch they could see a group of people, dim figures gathered round a table on which an object rested. Soon they knew this was a victrola. And soon too, by their tones of voice, they recognized Alma and Charles Shawl. These latter, together with several others, were preparing for a porch dance, though, as it turned out, Alma was the only girl.

Bruce and Nathan took seats on the other side and divided their awareness between responses to the night and attention to the music, the sounds of dancing feet, and the high spirited voice of Alma emerging from a background of male conversation and male laughter.

They heard her say, playfully: "I'm looking for a good dancer."

After several rounds, breathless and exhilirated, she came towards them and, after greetings, balanced herself on the porch railing near them.

Antrum immediately suggested, in a clear low voice: "Perhaps now you are in the vicinity of what you are looking for."

"I would not be surprised," she responded, archly. "But you cannot tell a good dancer by looking at him."

"In which case," said Antrum with alacrity, "if you will, we will have the next dance."

"Fast!" was Bruce's comment as he chuckled to himself.

They did. And it was not long before they affirmed delight in it. Nathan felt her body soft and light, supple, firm, giving, essentially a woman's body, with the flush loveliness of silk to touch. The rhythms between them were graceful and delicate. The music was jazz; but Antrum held her in tenderness.

"You look so serious," she said softly, "that I never would have guessed."

"Have you never known a serious man who could dance?"

"Yes," she told him, "but I have never seen a man as serious as you."

"Oh, I see!" he laughed.

After a pause, she asked: "Do you feel me trying to lead you?"

"No, I don't," he said. "Are you? Do you often take the lead?"

"The habit was formed in college—girls dancing together. I try not to, when I am with a man."

"Do you take the lead in other things?" he asked. "In life generally, I mean?"

"Sometimes," she answered. "Sometimes I have to."

"You like to?" he asked.

"Often I have to," she replied, indirectly.

One record ended, and, with gay salutes to Bruce, they put on a second.

"You are having a good summer at York?" he asked her.

"Very good, thank you," was her reply.

"You should be, you are, I am sure, very capable at your work. You find the inside life of an inn interesting?"

"Quite!"

"It leaves you time for other things?"

"Not much," she laughed.

"But when you find time, then what? What interests you?"

"Books," she answered. "What are you writing now?"

"And people?" he asked. "Or are you so at ease with people that you only casually like them, rather than find them of special interest?"

"Life interests me very much. I wonder about people."

"And about yourself?"

"The main puzzle," she said, and gave a strange little laugh.

"You try to understand it?"

"Yes, I do," she replied. A grave and somewhat uncertain note had come into her voice, suggesting that she was seriously concerned with herself, and, at the same time, wished to avoid mention of the subject. And then she said: "You have not told me what you are writing."

"I will, if you would like."

The record ended. With gay sweeps they went towards Bruce who arose and showed that he was about to ask for the next dance. Just then Nathan glanced at his watch and saw that it was past the time for his bus. So, bidding them a hasty goodnight, he ran down the walk and then found that the green front lights of the bus were not yet in sight. He had to wait five minutes.

There was no moon. The Shawl, almost phosphorescent, loomed

within darkness. He could see dark forms on the porch, Bruce and Alma, passing before a lighted window, dancing.

When he reached it, the hotel was asleep, the porch before his windows empty. So, stepping lightly so as not to disturb the people in the next room, he slipped on a top-coat, went out, and pulled a chair near to the porch railing.

How still and vast the night was. The bodies of men were quiet, their consciousness asleep, gone into another dimension. The houses of York Beach were regular forms of darkness. The ocean was black. Waves rolled in, broke and churned against the rocks beneath him. The endless rhythms of the universe were in them. One star was so bright and low on the night horizon that it cast a trail of light across the waters.

Gazing contemplatively at the serene silvery black cosmos, Antrum expanded and felt deep energies astir in him. For a long while he sat there, thoughts and senses one, experiencing the being of sheer sensibility.

He arose the next morning with a feeling of integration and direction, the kind of feeling, or state, which usually presaged a period of good work. His recognition of the state was accompanied by an inward smile and nod of affirmation. It was as if he were greeting an intimate friend. Something cautioned him to regard it with a trace of skepticism; but he could see no reason for doing so. For, after all, he was, it seemed, in first-rate general condition, and the results of two days of effort were in his favor. Last night, the close of it, had been wonderful; and he had slept in his new room, thus giving to it his atmosphere. There was every reason why he should be able to work today. Already his mind was active with ideas.

With firm strides he went to try a place for breakfast, his first breakfast in York Beach. The summer cottages he passed bid for his interest, and so did the people and the waitresses in the restaurant selected. They insisted that he see the kind of life which visited York Beach. But, promising to attend to them later on when he was well within his work, he cancelled their appeals and managed to hold his mind within his own world. He did note, however,

the strength of his wish to keep York Beach out of him. Also, with irritation, he noted his over-concern with his own state. He was treating himself as if he were a psychological invalid.

Finished with breakfast, he arranged for a box in the post office, and then returned straight to his room. Women were in chairs in front of his windows. He felt a flash of angry annoyance, a touch of constriction. Judging, however, that the clatter of a typewriter would drown them out, and, at the same time provide him with the means of an equivalent noisy self-assertion, he opened his machine and set to work.

He worked all morning, with satisfactory results; and it was with friendly eyes for York Beach—rather an attractive little place, in some ways—that he strode down the gravelled walk for lunch. The waitresses, he noticed, were rather pretty and quite animated. They seemed to have a lot of fun in their work, informal but attentive.

But, back in his room once again, a wave of fatigue and dryness suddenly descended on him. He felt that all at once something had been taken out of him, leaving him without energy, without interest, without substance. Nothing seemed to have value. Not himself, not his work, not life. Why this struggle? Why this goad to build in emptiness?

Nevertheless for a short while he tried to work against this state, carried on by the inertia of past strain. He succeeded only in growing nervous. He was using cigarettes to stimulate himself. He stopped it. Consciously relaxing, he reclined on his bed, head supported by an arm. His bed was a narrow little thing. He asked in irritation why men, with the world full of soft fine stuffs, insisted on having such uncomfortable sacks. He heard women talking. He did not want to hear them. Damn them, he said. He tried to read, and what he read sounded like pure nonsense. He gave up, and let the bed hold him.

He was anxious for four o'clock, the time for seeing Bruce and going bathing.

But before this time had come, he had gradually accumulated enough energy to feel more himself again. So, rising from bed, and noticing with relief, with a sense of liberation, that the porch was

temporarily deserted, he went out and occupied a chair. Well, he told himself, what more could he expect? He had worked all morning. Was not that enough? He could hardly ask to step immediately into a full day's work.

And then, without him asking for it, his mind began clearly thinking into the material, not of his slight article, but of the rather serious book he had in preparation.

The scene which met his eyes, in contrast to the subject of his book, a work dealing with certain of the personal and cultural problems of modern man, gave him an idea for an introduction. What better way to begin such a book, he asked, than by creating the sense of a world in which no problems exist? So he began writing:

As I begin this book I find myself contemplating a scene which seems to say that neither I nor anyone need concern himself with what men call human problems. Indeed, along this coast, the coast of Maine, the sea and sky this afternoon as my gaze points through them, oceanward, are so serene and of such amplitude that the strange problems of man are cancelled and almost proved to be impossible. Man and his works are made to take their places in a scheme of Nature, in an order of Cosmos, so vast that one is forced either to abstract all value from human problems or to class them among the variety of strange illusions which we human creatures inexplicably give rise to and perpetuate. In either case, the problems themselves are stripped of their importance. Man's problems are placed on a par with the problems of sea gulls. There seems to be no necessity and no urgence to deal with them.

Below me, the rock coast forms a wall against which the waves in unending series roll and break and dash their foam. The waves are without nerves, without soul. No nerves cause the ocean to feel fatigue and pain. Death is the premium men pay for having nerves. And before death—problems. Sandpipers, grey, grey-white, agile experts in securing food where a false wing would cause death against rocks, seem problemless. No man is in the water. There has been no shipwreck.

Yes, up the way a bit, where a beach shelves under the sea, I can view the small figures of people bathing in the surf, shouting, laughing. But neither there nor elsewhere in this serene world is

there anything which, to my senses, takes the form of a human problem. I know, of course, that the people bathing have them. They have money problems, sex, educational, political, religious—in fact, they probably have, with personal variations, the entire scale of man's main problems. But those in the hotel I do not see. And of those bathing, nothing in their visible behavior gives evidence of their existence. The movements of the bathers' arms and limbs reveal no concern greater than that displayed by the rhythms of the surf.

Having written this much, Antrum's mind, like a balky engine, stopped dead. And so, knowing better than to try to force it further, he prepared to leave immediately for Long Beach.

Rather than take the bus he walked. The tide was out, and he walked along the beach, not seeing the line of summer cottages, seeing only the ocean, feeling the resistance of an off-sea wind. His body was active, springy, muscular. He was aware of a vital kinesthetic sense. The longer he walked the more his body pulsed with blood. So changed was he, so energized, in such an up-mood, that he had difficulty realizing that only a few hours ago he, the same person, without energy, without interest, without substance and value, had been lying flat on his back in an empty bloodless down-mood. Sharp changes like this were characteristic of him.

Arriving at The Shawl in fine state, he found Bruce already out, having tea. Bruce said the water was great, and mentioned that Alma was still in bathing. Nathan needed no urging. Using Bruce's room he hurriedly put on his suit and went to the beach.

Antrum looked well in his suit. His tall body was athletic, and still showed traces of the time when its muscles were clean and rippling. With shouts and raillery he joined Alma; and together they sported in the surf, did stunts, swam out beyond the breakers, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Now she was seeing still another side of him, a joyous, spontaneous, boyish side, one which she liked very much. She found herself wishing that they might keep on playing and swimming forever.

Later on, at dinner, Nathan and Bruce both were in high spirits. For the most part, they told each other stories, stories which, spoken

with low voice, were followed by peals of laughter that could be heard all over the house.

When Alma came in for a short visit, she did not fail to mention that she guessed what they had been up to, and felt slighted that she had been left out. They promised that she would be included in the next round.

Still later, now again to themselves, Bruce told Nathan of a letter he had received from a man, a friend, whom he characterized as a person whom life was forever kicking, who tried to kick back, who always got the worst of it. This led to a change of tone towards serious conversation.

"It seems," said Bruce, twisting in his chair, and showing that he did not like the truth of it, "it seems that when life kicks you —she is forever at it—she demands that you not kick back. If you do kick back, you get the worst of it. You get two kicks for your one, four kicks for your two. You've got to smile. At least, try to. You've got to give pleasure for pain, beauty for ugliness, love for hate. If you don't, she'll leave you alone, or break you. It is a terrible thing."

"Yes, it is," said Nathan. "This it is to suffer." His voice was vibrant, weighty, with a live body and deep psyche back of it. He remained silent for a time, and when he next spoke his tone was dominant and aggressive. "That's generally true. But I think, Bruce, there are times and cases where you've got to strike. Not necessarily strike back. Though that too. But initiate a strike. There are people and circumstances with which you can do nothing, who will not respect you unless you give them a clean hard blow. Then too, we've got to be alert not to become negative towards negatives." He looked as though he had in mind a concrete situation which had given rise to just these issues. His eyes were narrowed, his jaw thrust forward.

"No, Nathan," Bruce denied with feeling. "What would you have, war to stop war, punishment to stop crime? That's what's the matter with the world. Nobody can stop striking."

"Ah, yes," said Nathan, "quite true. But there is a difference between mechanical blind blows—which are killing us—and intelligent hard strokes."

"But granting there is, which I doubt, how are we going to know the difference?"

"Difficult, surely," said Nathan. "However, on the whole, and in a very deep sense, I think you are right. We must contain our poison. We must learn how to contain it. But we cannot contain it. We do not know how. How are we to learn? Merely being passive is not enough. In truth, being passive is being nothing. What's to be done?"

"I don't know, Nathan. But I do know it must be done." As he continued, he too seemed to have in mind a concrete case, and looked pained. "People have tried to destroy me, deliberately set out to destroy me. And I know that when I've tried to stop them, tried to destroy them, I've only succeeded in tearing myself. They have kept on, harder than ever, fed by my thrusts." Bruce's eyes lowered. Then he looked up impulsively and asked: "What do you think?"

"Several things," said Nathan. "In the first place, your problem was not to control the other people, but to control their effects in yourself." Then he moved his head skeptically, and continued: "Perhaps we cannot contain poison because we do not know how to transmute it into non-poisonous matter. We are full of it. It has been pumped into us from birth onwards. It is deadly in us. We have to let it out. We get an illusory sense of power in doing so. The old revenge motive. Unable to transmute it, we, each one, wants and aims to poison someone else. You know, a terrible example. I know people who, having contracted venereal disease from one person, aim to and do deliberately, out of vengefulness, pass it on to the next. Man has a stubborn will to circulate poison. We know it means destruction to the individual and to life in general. Yet we keep on, powerless to reverse the process, in ignorance of how to reverse it. Ah, we know how to transmit it. We are diabolically expert. How to contain and transmute it? And most of us, most of the so-called adults, are so far gone that we would be unwilling to learn and try even if the opportunity were presented."

Nathan's face was tensed, his lips turned with satiric bitterness. Then he gradually relaxed and smiled, and looked at Bruce with

very warm affection. Bruce gave a deep sigh, a sound which came from the very depths of him.

After a long silence they began talking again, but of lighter matters; and so the time passed until Nathan's bus was due. It was then that Bruce remembered to tell him that, the next day being Sunday, dinner would be at 1:30, and that Mrs. Shawl had invited the two of them to dine with her.

Antrum's Sunday morning was given deliberately to loafing. He sunned on the rocks, watched two boats leave the harbor for deep sea fishing, wished there was a sail which he could rent for a month. He saw a number of people with long poles trying to catch something from the edge of the rocks. People dressed for Sunday leaving the hotel to attend the village church. Religion. The twentieth century after Jesus Christ. He saw several rock spiders darting among crevaces with alarming rapidity. Gulls, pure white, glided overhead or rested upon the waves. A hollow booming sound came from a rock whenever a wave pounded it. Many figures were on the beach and in the surf. And, for a short while, far out to sea, he saw a brilliant white speck, a white sail.

He was dressed in white trousers, a camel's hair coat, and a tie of brilliant dark orange. The wind blew through his hair. His skin was tanning.

At 1:30 he and Bruce went in to dine with Mrs. Shawl, her son Charles, and Alma. This, for the present, was the family. But Antrum was told that later on in August a number of others were coming from New York, Chicago, and Oregon for a family reunion. He looked forward to experiencing this reunion, for he felt that it would occasion a fine spirit.

Mrs. Shawl, wearing embroidered white silk, her silvery hair in a crown, her face deep glowing, was a warm and active hostess, keeping them well supplied with all good things, among them baked chicken, a specialty, prepared in a way quite new to Antrum. She also kept going a lively round of conversation.

Charles tended to be silent, but it was evident that he never missed a point. Alma was gay, and also dreamy. And it could be seen that Bruce and Nathan were in playful rivalry to say the

best and wittiest things. Bruce in particular flashed a number of remarks, apt images, brilliant turns of speech, which won laughter.

Books and authors were mentioned, opinions and impressions of them. Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, John Dewey, Keyserling, D. H. Lawrence. At length, Mrs. Shawl, saying that she wondered how he stood with Bruce's group of writers, asked him what he thought of H. L. Mencken.

Bruce looked at once amused and undecided. And then he expressed a number of things very rapidly to the effect that Mencken lacked intuition, imagination, and aesthetic sense; and that, though he did good work exposing and destroying stupidities and bigotries, he had nothing constructive to offer. As for literature, Bruce said he thought Mencken's range of appreciation quite limited; and since he was the arch-enemy of whatever he did not like, and since he did not like what many of the younger writers were doing, or trying to do, he was the arch-enemy of much promising literature.

"What do you think, Nathan?" Bruce then asked.

"More or less what you do," said Antrum. "Mencken's attitude to life seems to be that life is worthwhile provided that you find it amusing. It is said that he advises people not to commit suicide but to keep on living because otherwise they would miss seeing the next amusing act of the show: the presidential elections, the next war. Well," and Nathan smiled and shrugged his shoulders, "that is one attitude. You could hardly call it a mature attitude. Nor is it suited to leadership, to a man of Mencken's influence. But also, by the way, Mencken works hard. He seems to find value in hard work. In skilled work. Provided that the work is productive, there are not many better values. And then you know, Mencken does his share of clear headed thinking." He glanced at Alma and then continued: "I remember reading not long ago an article of his on the marriage question. He was discussing companionate marriage. Towards the end he said, I think, something like this: that marriage is a form of union between man and woman which implies and necessitates a deliberate surrender of certain so-called liberties in order that the two people, with mutual trust, may feel mutually secure. It is, in a sense, a formal recogni-

tion of mutual trust. A formal agreement that the two people will forego certain things so that they can feel secure in starting and building a life together. If this is so—and I think it is—then there can be no companionate marriage. There can be marriage. There can be 'companionate.' But it must be companionate something else. Well," said Antrum, "when Mencken singled out trust and a sense of security as two of the essentials of marriage, it seems to me that he touched true ones. And in showing the companionate project to be something not marriage, he cleared the way for intelligent discussion of it. It was a short article, but a piece of expert thinking and writing."

Mrs. Shawl nodded agreement.

Alma frowned and said thoughtfully: "It is a difficult situation. I wonder how men and women allowed themselves to drift into it. Didn't they see the home breaking? Why can't men and women live together any more?"

"The War, and after the War," said Bruce. "It happened suddenly."

Nathan smiled strangely and asked Alma: "You have heard that there are such things as human types?"

"Yes," she said, "I have, but I don't know anything about them."

"And that there is such a thing as correspondence between types, and lack of correspondence?"

"Yes, something about it."

"And that an exact knowledge of human types is possible?"

"No, I've never heard that," said Alma.

"Bruce has," said Nathan, "but he is skeptical."

"No I am not skeptical, Nathan," Bruce denied, with a touch of heat.

"Well, Alma," Nathan went on, "I have reason to believe that such knowledge does exist, and that those who possess it know, among other things, the types of men and women who belong together, and the types who do not. And also, I have reason to believe that this knowledge is available. But we may be sure of one thing, which is, that knowledge of this kind will be the last thing sought by supposedly intelligent men and women. They will go to all lengths to invent fantastic and absurd ways and means,

but they will not turn one step in the direction of useful understanding, even though the possibility of it were presented to them on a silver plate."

Alma was inwardly disturbed by his apparent cynicism. "Why," she asked, "why do you think that?"

"Because I cannot think otherwise," he answered. "Man has been at it—I cannot say living—for thousands of years, and here we are, not knowing, not yet having learned how to build and maintain the simplest unit of human relationship. But there is no end to the number and endurance of our inhuman relationships."

He paused, took a deep breath, and then said: "Ah, well, one other person is enough to make life sweet. And there are a sufficient number of such people." He smiled and added: "Bruce there, Bruce falls in love with all New York when he loves one woman."

The company laughed, not at Bruce, but because it wanted to laugh. Bruce, brighter than they, chuckled with the others.

Mrs. Shawl thought this a good note on which to leave the table and go to the porch.

Alma as usual took her place balanced on the porch railing, head against a post. Mrs. Shawl occupied a rocking chair. Charles excused himself to attend to business. Nathan and Bruce each had a corner of the porch-swing.

The mid-afternoon sun was on the other side of the house, but to the front and rear it was full upon the lawns and gardens. The earth droned in August. The heat was indifferent. Everything seemed latent, in an interval between conception and birth. Things grew, but they had already been planted, and were not yet ripe for harvest.

A large number of motor-cars were on the road. Weekenders could be seen in nearby cottages, wearing bathing suits of brilliant reds and greens and blues. Some were going to the beach, some leaving it. Other guests at The Shawl passed in and out the main door. They smiled, but moved slowly.

It began to feel like Sunday afternoon.

After half an hour of pleasant talk Mrs. Shawl said she must go in and see how things were running; and Bruce remembered the

letters he had to write. So these two left the porch, Alma and Nathan remaining.

For a while they were silent, Nathan watching Alma as she balanced there, body relaxed, spirit dreaming, her eyes far off in space. And then he asked her:

"What do you see out there?"

"A face."

"Suppose you look the other way, then what do you see?"

"A face."

"The same face?"

She said yes.

For a while they were silent.

"Each time when your body is still, do you dream the same dream?"

"The same dream."

"How far away is he?"

"Too far for a dream to reach."

"And if he were here, would he and the dream touch?"

She looked at Nathan, then shook her head and said: "I do not think so."

Again they were silent. Then Antrum arose, went towards, and stood near her. Looking clear into her eyes he held before her an open up-turned palm. For a moment she hesitated, and then placed her hand with confidence softly within it. His fingers closed tenderly.

"You are lovely."

Delicately she flushed.

"The night we danced together—I have never felt a woman's body more lovely."

She flushed deeper, and then asked: "Did it surprise you?"

"Less than a serious man dancing surprised you. Yes and no. My senses expected it. But my mind had seen you so active and efficient."

And then he began to sense a strange uncertain actively wavering vibration between them. He became aware of what seemed to be two different sets of rhythms. One, was the rhythm of a direct and lovely contact. This was the one he had felt deeply when she

first placed her hand in his. And now there was this other one, this uncertain wavering rhythm which was, he sensed, the more basic of the two. Becoming aware of it gave him an instant understanding that fundamentally there was a strangely acute difference between their vibrations.

"You seem to contain," he said, "a number of surprisingly different features."

"Do I?" she asked, and, for a moment, seemed worried. "What are they? I'd like to know."

"Then suppose we use the swing? A little better than standing here?"

When they were in the swing he said: "Well, you know," and smiled, "you are quite a dreamer. No one would think it if they saw your body moving. But a number of times I have noticed you come to a sudden stop in your active self, and immediately thereafter you not only begin dreaming, you become lost in dream. And not only is the active world forgotten, but you do not even hear conversation directed at you. Even at the table today, with the dinner going on, with gay talk all about you, you would enter it for a while and then suddenly be gone far off completely in another world."

"Is it that marked, that obvious?" she asked, flushing slightly.

"It is certainly evident, but whether most people see it or not—"

"I wonder. Some do not. Some of my best friends have never seen it, and have never understood me. They think I am all active, or. . . . And one or two think I am all dreamer. It's odd." She lowered her face in a puzzled, half embarrassed way.

"The men you have known," he asked, "have they known how to be active with Alma active, to be imaginative with Alma dreaming?"

She lifted her open eyes to his. . . . But before she could reply in words, a voice from inside the house called her and she had to hastily excuse herself and go in.

He saw the very thing he had been talking about happen, only, it was the other way around. Alma dreaming suddenly became Alma active. With him, her interior self had begun to live. Now, responding to the call, as she walked down the porch and turned

in the door, with a wave to him, she was, he saw, Alma, the brisk stepping, well set up, capable young woman.

A few moments later Bruce came out onto the porch and suggested that instead of going into the water they take a walk along a country road to York Village where he, Bruce, among other things, could post his letters. This, they did.

Nathan was again delighted to experience the aliveness of Bruce's senses, the unconscious poetry of Bruce's response to Nature. Bruce seemed to register everything: the trees were living individuals to him; the flowers; an inland pool surrounded by tall grass with a slight mist hovering over it; the flight of a heron; the rhythms of fields and cleared spaces; the subtle hues of the changing sky as the sun sloped towards sunset. Bruce felt beauty everywhere and gave Nature the response of wonder.

Antrum, not greatly in love with Nature, loved it through Bruce.

And, as they walked along, Nathan at the same time was thinking of his experience with Alma. One thing he knew very definitely: she evoked in him a wish. But as he thought of it, it seemed that the wish was not for her. Though she evoked it, it seemed that she, personally, was not its object. It was as if she stood for something else, a symbol of something he strongly desired. She attracted him. They attracted each other. But as symbols attract. Yes, he liked her very much. She was a woman, and lovely. But this wish, active in him now, was somehow not for her. What was it for? Or was his sense of it a faulty sense? Was it for her?

He began to see numerous signs of a phase of apparent nonfulfilment. Doubtless he was in such a phase. Perhaps Alma, his experience with her, was to be a significant part of it. He and the earth both were in August.

They were entering York Village, a town of New England, with quiet streets, lovely old trees, a restored 17th century church, two cemeteries, one dating from far back, and white houses surrounded by shrubbery and lawns behind whose cool walls one could imagine people living the entire cycle of their earth-experience. It was very different from York Beach.

Bruce mailed his letters, and then, without lingering, they turned

about and began walking home. At another time they would pay a longer visit to the village.

On the porch that evening, Alma sat between Bruce and Nathan in the swing. The men were aware of a friendly rivalry between them for her attention. But feeling ran deeper. Here for the first time in a serious form they sensed her presence evoking the old old triangle.

Monday morning saw Antrum again in harness, trying to work. He tried to bring his best forces to bear on the manuscript of his serious book. He tried to carry on and finish the introduction begun two days ago. He got nowhere.

Deciding that this was too heavy a task, or, rather, that he was too sluggish for it—he felt out of contact with the world of ideas, out of contact with feeling—he then attempted to write just one page of his small article.

Five women were on the porch near his windows. In a flash of anger he crumpled a page of scribbling and hurled it at a window. He smoked cigarettes. He quit his writing-table and reclined on the bed. He got up from bed and strode out on the porch. He gazed at the sky. His face scowled. He saw one woman, an amiable matronly looking person, smiling pleasantly at him, nodding the day's greetings. He smiled back at her as pleasantly as he could. After all, he told himself, these are good kindly folk. Don't project your distemper onto them. But, not being free to hate them, he soon left the porch, took writing materials from his room, and went down to the hotel's main sitting-room.

People saw him enter and nodded good morning. He nodded back. People saw him trying to write. He saw people trying to play bridge and watch him at the same time. He got up and left the sitting-room. Once again he sat at his writing-table. His tense face scowled. He felt scorn for his own inability to work the machine called Nathan Antrum. He felt contempt for the world's idling people. He began satirizing, not the women outside his window, but just some people in general who thought they were having a great time taking a summer vacation.

That afternoon he tried to work. The following morning he tried

to work. Unable to do so, his wish to work grew very intense. Its intensity produced physical heat. Every inch of him seemed bent on producing one page of literature.

He did work a little, and then had to stop. He started, stopped. Started, stopped. Until, finally, an outburst of bitter fury which included Bruce, Alma, York Beach, the state of Maine, America, the ocean's moisture, and his own mechanicality, counselled him to apply intelligence to the situation.

He was quite aware that the main factors of the situation were already known to him. He had wished to disregard them. And, disregarding them, he had been brought to the present turbulent state. Well then, what he had to do was to summarize the factors, realize them, and adopt towards them a constructive workable attitude. The minute he decided to do this, he felt inwardly calm; and he found that for this purpose his mind was at his service. It was as if his mind, freed from his coercion, knew with what materials to function.

The plain fact was, he summarized, that York Beach was either already in him, or that York Beach demanded open entrance to his consciousness. That his own world was either already displaced, or must be displaced, for the time being. He must incorporate new materials. Not only York Beach, but something in himself, some phase of his own development evidently demanded that the life of York be taken in by him, digested, assimilated, understood, accepted, transmuted. The experience of York Beach insisted on being accepted and spiritualized.

Opposed to this insistence was his own wish to work. It was in order to work that he had come to York. He wished to follow his prearranged plan. In attitude, he had no objection to trying to understand and spiritualize the experience of York. In fact, taken by itself, he affirmed this effort. Often he had made this effort in other places and at other times. And in general he always aimed to open himself to experience with the aim of discovering its significance. Indeed, before coming to York, he had asked: "What meaning for me at York Beach?" But just at this time he had no wish, he had not felt the need for new experience of the kind which York provided. Or, rather, he did not wish this experience to

dominate him. It was the threat of its domination that he had been struggling against. He wished to work. He had much to do. If he were working, he would gladly accept York Beach. He would gladly accept work and York together. But he had, he realized, been strongly opposed to surrendering work, the kind he had planned, in total favor of York experience. His wish to prescribe for himself had strongly opposed itself to York's insistence.

Well, he could not work, that is, not for the time being, not as he had planned. Each day York grew stronger. Well, after all, perhaps some deeper and more necessary purpose, a purpose which he could not see, would be served if he accepted York, positively, entirely. In truth and fundamentally, he was igorant of the formations and transformations needed by him. Life worked; his little mind would do well if it continuously observed what it could. At any rate, there seemed to be no alternative. Yes, leave York. Go elsewhere. But he knew quite certainly that he had no intention of leaving it. It challenged him. He was going to stay and see it through.

However, though he would modify his plans and demand less of himself, he would by no means give up efforts to work. These also seemed necessary, an integral and inevitable part of the general pattern. So it was. Together with what work he could do, he would voluntarily open himself to York's impressions. Yes, he would take them.

He glanced around his small cramped room. He said to himself: "You can no more impose your plans and wishes on life than you can impress beauty on this room."

He heard his neighbors in the next room moving about. And he could not help wondering according to what fate, for what objective, he, of all people, had been led to and deposited in this place. He glanced through the curtains of his window and saw the women on the porch. Were they similar to the shore-dwellers? If so, he was amongst them, jammed as close to them as they, along the road, were jammed to the road.

He smiled ironically and said to himself: "A trap. Antrum's summer trap. It has been waiting for me more than thirty years. Well, it has caught me. And here I find myself at the bottom of life, di-

rectly opposite to what my wish for a brilliant summer pictured. Work be damned!" Then, bitterly—"What mockery! Where oh where, sweet youth, is the perfect place! Yea, the perfect place for the perfect idiot!" And then, with stoic knowing—"So, Nathan. Cause and effect begin and end in yourself."

CHAPTER IV

As a result of Antrum's conscious recognition of the situation, as a result of his new attitude both towards his wish to work and towards York experience, his urgence to work diminished, and, at the same time, York Beach became less insistent. What he wished to do retained its value but ceased to goad him. The life of York retained its character but ceased to constrain him. This coincidence of diminished pressure from the inside and from the outside let him see at once that it was largely his own subjective state which had caused York experience to seem so pressing. This did not mean that York was not pressing. It was. For him, dwelling in it, it was the kind of place which would have been insistent whatever his state. The simple fact that he was he, that York Beach was as it was, meant that there must be some degree of friction between them. But he recognized without doubt that the intensity of this friction had resulted from the intensity of his nonfulfilled wish to think and write. For now, as his internal feeling of urgence diminished, so did York's threat of domination.

Antrum was so constituted, however, his sense of the amount of work he wished to do, and of the short time he had in which to accomplish it, was so great, that he could not be patient with protracted periods of comparative nonproductivity. In time, and in short time, York Beach or no York Beach, and whatever the demands of the situation, he would again experience an ever increasing need to consciously continue actualizing the forms he had in mind. One of these forms, the main one, was the perfected form of himself. Relative to this form, his books were by-products.

But, for a period of several days, there was a general lessening of pressure. Antrum found himself in a calm, almost serene, faintly smiling, interested state. Towards himself he was less a taskmaster,

more a genial friend; and, well disposed towards himself, he became well disposed towards York Beach and life.

When he could work, he did so. Sometimes it was in his room; sometimes on the rocks; once or twice in the hotel's main sitting-room. He came to know a number of people by their names, found them, in their ways, quite human and interesting, and had good words for them. They felt he was a bit strange and aloof; but accepted him as such, and took him to be an odd part of their summer vacation.

When he could not work, he made contacts with York Beach.

He had a sense that never at any time had it been other than a summer place. So he made inquiries into its history. What information he could gather confirmed his belief that it had never been a real port. Unlike Tennant's Harbor and many of the Maine coast towns before iron and steam introduced modern power propelled vessels, York Beach, it seemed, had never had a shipyard; its harbor had never seen schooners; its shores had never housed sailmakers and sea captains. Nor had it been a fishing village. Though on the sea, it had never given rise to sea life.

Nor did Antrum think it had ever been agricultural. The land around did not look fertile, and, in general, there was something about the place which suggested its lack of contact with all forms of human productivity. He learned, however, that there had been farms; that, indeed, several of the shore hotels stood on what had been farm sites. He was told that one of the hotel proprietors had been born and reared on the farm which lay, as it were, under his present hotel. This man loved York Beach. It was his home. And, quite aside from the fact that he made his living from the hotel, he had a genuine attachment to the place itself, preferring to live in York far more than in any other place. Antrum felt respect for this man's feelings. He had respect for the feelings of whoever experienced a real affection for the place. He hoped they would understand that though on occasion he might satirize it, this satire was *his* feeling of it, one of his feelings; and that, in expressing it, he had no wish to violate their feelings.

But York's farm period had passed away many years ago; and since that time it had in fact been a summer resort, going through

the ups and downs, the phases of popularity and disfavor usual to such places. Just now, following a slump, it was rapidly gaining in public favor, owing in large measure to an active Chamber of Commerce which year by year was improving business conditions. This accounted for the liveliness in its streets.

Antrum was told that its population in summer was three thousand, in winter, three hundred.

At odd times he walked about the different sections: the business district, the outlying sections, the open public space in front of the beach, and observed its shops, houses, and various forms of life.

He noted two tailor shops which seemed to be doing good business; a dry goods store; a barber shop; several grocery stores; a drug store; two bowling alleys, one of which was popular, having people in it day and night; and, together with the movies, the candy shop, and the Great White Way, to make the thing complete, the stand of a woman palm-reader and clairvoyant.

On the ocean front there was a band stand, where, during the height of the season, concerts were given twice a day.

There was an active fire department. It came out often and paraded the streets to boost business for benefit dances.

Most of the smaller summer cottages had names. These names, painted on signs the worse for wear, were in full view, usually posted over the entrance to the porch. Antrum made quite a collection of them: "Seldom In," "Do Drop Inn," "Grand View," "Ocean Spray," "Nakomis," "Kippy-Nee," "Cove View," "Little Den," "U-All-No," and many others. The larger boarding houses and hotels had regular and imposing names: "The Arlington," "The Hiawatha."

One sign, a home-made advertisement, caught his attention. It appeared regularly each Thursday and was taken in Saturday evenings. It was posted on the lawn of a clean and shapely little house. Scrawled in uneven letters on a sort of blackboard, the sign read:

Order Your Beans and
Brown Bread now
for Saturday

And, among the numerous professional advertisements of the movies, benefit dances, and so on, one day a notice of particular interest to him appeared. It announced a contest in the dance pavillon to decide and proclaim, first prize, second prize, third prize—Miss York Beach. It was, he recognized, similar to proclamations elsewhere. Cities and towns the length and width of America were electing their representatives. There was, he knew, a Miss Chicago, A Miss America. Nay more, a Miss Universe. Indeed he had seen, driving through the streets of Chicago, passing up Michigan Boulevard, escorted by a squadron of motorcycle police, amid much demonstration—Miss Universe.

Of evenings when he went to The Shawl, Nathan would tell Bruce of the new things he had discovered at York Beach. On one or two occasions Bruce was much amused to see Nathan growing enthusiastic about it, becoming, as Bruce said with a twinkle, a regular York Beacher.

And also, Antrum was carefully observing the people, the types at York. In restaurants he would linger over coffee, seeing those who came in, and those who passed the windows. During walks. On the beach. And he made particularly good use of the women on the porch before his windows. Instead of resenting them, or of fuming because he was hedged in so close to them, at odd times he listened attentively to what they were saying.

He could not help but characterize them as too dull to be bored. Their conversation consisted in telling where they had come from, and often asking: "Is that so? Do you know so and so?" "How do you like this place?" They would discuss the hotel, and, if they had been to York before—a number had—they would tell where they had stayed during previous visits, and compare hotels. They made comments on the good air, the fine view, the number of people in bathing, a boat in the harbor, an airplane ride which some younger person had taken. If it was hot, they would say it was hot, and then express the hope that it would soon cool off.

Their main topic, however, was food. Mornings, afternoons, and evenings, these ladies talked of food. They would wander off on some other matter, and then, invariably, come back to food. They

told each other where they had found good food, where they had found the best food. There were many comparisons of eating places. They offered criticisms of the coffee and tea served. Different restaurants, it seemed, were better for the different meals. One place served good breakfasts, but poor or indifferent dinners and suppers. Another place, the reverse. And so on. They discussed in detail what they got at the various meals. The rolls, the eggs, the bacon. The chowder, the fish, the meats, the chicken. They mentioned the annoyances and pleasures of eating away from home. The price, size, and quality of pies. Constant, unending talk of food. Desserts. What places had the best desserts. "How much do they serve?" "Does such and such a place give extra helpings?" Some places did, and some places did not.

Their talk had sluggish refinement. They were, in a sense, gentlewomen. But when Antrum saw, that is, visualized, behind their words, the actual quantities of food they ate, and when moreover he recognized that their overwhelmingly main concern was eating, to him their talk assumed rather monstrous vulgar proportions. For he could see: without gusto, without great relish, without keen hunger or sharp appetite, but simply as something to do to kill time and then talk about, food in quantities entering them only to overweigh and clog them. The process itself, plus their talk, became in his eyes and feelings a kind of unconscious obscenity.

Often he registered their behavior without comment. It was simply to be observed that they did behave so. Sometimes he satirized them. Now and again he felt sharp pain to think that these women were the dull adult resultants of vivid and promising childhood. That they were human beings, containing in germ the potentials of marvelous womanhood. At other times they were objects of sadness. One woman in particular impressed him so.

She was a slight woman, a trifle beyond middle age, her hair greying, her face with rather sensitive fine lines. She sat with the other women but was inclined to be withdrawn and silent. Now and again she would say something. Her usual way of entering the conversation was by suddenly laughing, and then suddenly becoming silent again. She rocked. And as she rocked, an undertone of sound came from her, a sort of croon. Always, unless she laughed, this

croon came from her. To Antrum it sounded like a strange monotonous lullaby. Sitting in a rocker, on a canvass covered porch, looking over the sea, a middle-aged maiden, amid the buzz of summer chatter, to herself crooning a lullaby to a baby never to be born.

As Antrum continued gathering impressions of the people of York Beach, singly, and in groups, he began sensing in them a quality which, to his mind, was novel and unique. Just what this quality was, he could not at first tell. In the majority of people it existed, he was sure; but it was not sufficiently defined for him to see. He sensed its presence, but could not isolate it. He knew, however, that it was a quality of human life which never before in his experience had presented itself in this manner. He did not think it was, in a strict sense, unique to York Beach. Nor did he think it was altogether novel to him. But it showed in these people, and impressed him in a way to make it seem altogether singular.

For several days he was in curious doubt about it. The quality itself, and his search to isolate it, intrigued him. He was baffled. It was, it seemed, as plain as the nose on your face, and yet he could not see it satisfactorily. One day, however, he had opportunity to observe it in so pure a form that all doubt was removed.

He was having lunch in a small restaurant, the most popular place at the Beach. Its walls and ceiling were of plain wood painted white, clean and cheerful. All the tables were occupied. The waitresses were moving rapidly back and forth. There was a thick but not unpleasant atmosphere of food and humanity. A medley of sounds: human voices, clinking plates and knives and forks. A miscellany of young men drifted in to sit on stools at the counter and order pie and coffee.

For some while he had been eating, not taking particular notice of the people about him. The family was seated directly in front of him, at the next table. His eyes must have looked at them any number of times before his sight registered their presence. When it did, he felt inside him a strange thud.

A family of four, father, mother, and two daughters of nearly the same age, perhaps eighteen and nineteen. The mother had her back towards Antrum. She more than filled the chair and gave

the impression of being very solid. Her hair was greying. Her short plump neck, seen from the back, was pink, and white in the creases. She had been in the sun a good deal, not tanning, but growing redder, boiled lobster color. Across from her and facing Antrum the two daughters sat. They sat stolidly, side by side. Their flesh bloomed rawly. They were growing up to be just like their mother. Their faces were large, plump, with rounded strawberry checks and small noses, healthy and shiny. They said nothing. The mother ate her lunch. And they, stiff in their chairs, stolidly ate their lunch.

The father was at the head of the table. He was decidedly less rubicund than the women, but his bones were thick and heavy and he seemed to weigh in his seat. He sat in shirt sleeves, and, with slow stiff awkward movements, each one like the other, regular and monotonous, shovelled in food. His skin was grey and sallow. His colorless eyes sank back in his head, making deep sockets. There was quite a distance between his horn-rimmed glasses and his eye sockets. His nose was blunt and dull. His lips looked as though they never touched anything. His expression, a blank, sightless thing, told that he neither tasted nor felt anything. His hair was stringy, greying. His chest was caved in, yet it was a deep chest. He was, however, clean washed, laundered, and shaven. There was a trace of sluggish gentility about him. He ate.

They were silent. Not a word had they spoken. The two girls and their father kept their eyes lowered on their plates, eyes too vacant to see the plates. But now and again, perhaps every three minutes, the mother turned her head to glance at a woman sitting at another table to the side of her. When she did turn, Antrum could see her side face. In profile, it looked exactly like a hen's. The same glittering eyes, the same intense stupidity. The family neither spoke to nor looked at each other.

They were not angry. Irritation would have caused some show of tension, some sort of animation. Nothing was in them. Nothing passed between them to induce even the flicker of an expression. They were having lunch one noonday during their summer vacation.

The more Antrum looked, the more amazed he became. He began

feeling that their bland, stolid, stupid existence had qualities of the absolute and of the eternal.

He asked himself what occupation the man could be engaged in. What could he do to earn enough money to support himself, much less a family? He was not a farmer. He was too genteel and far too inactive to be able to make money farming. He was not a mechanic. Not alert and skilled enough. Certainly he was not in business for himself. When compared with him, the business men of York Beach looked clever and energetic. He might be engaged in an unskilled job in a mill. Perhaps he was an underclerk in an office. At any rate, some job which required no intelligence, no initiative, no responsibility. And yet, here he was with a family and motor-car, off vacationing.

A cow has lovely eyes and is curious as to who passes, so Antrum commented. The eyes of this family were flat and vacant with a glittering sheen so evidently a thing of the organs themselves that the absence of inner light was shockingly apparent. They were curious as to nothing.

A sea gull squaks and flies and dives for fish.

A dog shows all manner of sense and expressiveness.

This human family was unique in Nature.

During the time Antrum sat there, save for their shovellings of food, he saw and heard but one single sign of life from them. Out of silence, out of nowhere, the older daughter, with hardly a movement of her head, in a voice no more than a mumble, said:

"I get a headache if I don't keep my hat pulled down."

The younger sister turned and looked blankly at her. The mother glanced at the woman at the next table. The father shook his head once, and then mumbled a few broken words which Antrum could not hear. That was all.

The meal continued. They sat in heavy silence. They did not appear to notice each other again.

For the rest of the time Antrum saw them, their dull, stupid immobility glittered and was absolute.

He left them sitting there, his own state one of sheer amazement at the quality he had at last succeeded in isolating.

Antrum had no special plan of observation, but he noticed that, already having a sense of the nature of York Beach, he was progressing from the particular to the general, from single people to groups of people, from groups to the form and content of York Beach as a whole.

Of particular people there were a number, among them, the maid who attended to his room, a young woman who lived not far from York and who in the winter taught school. It was from her he received an expression which hit off the attitude of millions of Americans. She had been telling him of a motor ride she had taken, and to his question: "Do you like to drive?" she had replied: "Why sit when you can go?"

Then there was the proprietor of his hotel, a fine genial character whose home was Maine. Several of the hotel guests with whom he sometimes sat on the porch and talked. One of the bus drivers, a lively fellow with the devil in him. He drove the coach in an expert and racy way and had the girls crazy about him. A waitress or two. A clerk in the drug store where he bought cigarettes. And a number of others.

Among the groups there was the group of women on the porch in front of his windows.

The business people of York. They were active, up-and-coming, and seemed to be having a good season. They were friendly towards each other, and gave the people of York fair goods at moderate prices. They were, of course, sold to the idea of American prosperity, of progress, of making money and feeling secure.

Then there were the young fellows who frequented the bowling alleys and the dance casino. In their way, they were healthy and engaging, appeared to have much leisure, and were looking for a good time. They wanted money enough to have this good time. Later on, when married and older, they would doubtless swing into the current of business life which applauds money-success and condemns money-failure.

The waitresses were an interesting group. To Antrum they seemed to have more life and intelligence than the others. They were, without doubt, superior to the majority of the people they served. He learned that those at one restaurant were college girls

earning money for the next year and having an interesting vacation at the same time.

The York natives were comparatively few. But they too seemed to be made of better human stuff than the visitors.

Of those at the hotels and boarding houses, there were the regular guests, people who stayed a week or longer; the transients or overnight guests; and the week-enders. He learned that most of them came from Massachusetts, though some were from other places in Maine, some from New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, Washington, D. C., and from mid-western cities.

Not a few of the people who worked in York made the now established migration back and forth between northern summer resorts and southern winter resorts.

Antrum was not surprised to learn that many of those who were making money in York looked down on the place. If asked how they liked it, or if they lived there the year round, they let it be seen that, at least in their own opinions, they came from decidedly better places.

And yet, the whole town had an air of honest amiable democracy. There seemed to be no differences of social class. All were more or less of the same class: an easy mixing middle class. There was no social pretense. No one, or very few, were, or strove to be above this class. No one was, or allowed himself to be placed below it. There was no domineering, and no cringing. No giving of orders, no servility. Doubtless the transient nature of the place, together with the types who came to it, had much to do with allowing this condition to exist. At any rate, it seemed and was in fact far more honestly democratic than most of the American towns Antrum had experienced.

And it was a clean place, clean physically and socially. So far as he could see, there was no flagrant hypocrisy, no concealed vice. During the entire time he stayed there he saw no fights, no drunkenness, no animosities. Doubtless there was bootleg somewhere, but he saw no signs of it. Doubtless there were ugliness, trickery, backkniving, and the multitude of other vicious pastimes. But if so, he never witnessed them, nor did he have cause to think that they existed in any continued or widespread form. It had a certain cheap-

ness, and, from his point of view, a lack of inner life and of human atmosphere. And it was a transient summer place, what he had called it: a money-resort. But on the whole . . . Yes, concluded Antrum, York Beach is an honest, clean, and amiable little town.

As such, he accepted it. His relations with it were easy and friendly; and, after a period of a few days, he found himself pleasantly human. He was, he observed, less an Ishmael, less with his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; less urged to struggle; more directly naturally openly human than he had been in years. He smiled to himself and said that it was good for his pride and sense of isolation to take a vacation. At any rate, for a short while, he was a simple human being, participating with simplicity in the life of other human beings. And at the same time observing both himself and them.

Of course he did not, not in an actual outward sense, participate in the life of York Beach. It, as a whole, was a collective place, its life was the life of mass-men, its psychology was mass psychology. It had its wishes, its likes and dislikes, its aims and objectives. He was an individual, or, an individual in the making. As he came to know people better, as he grew to be a recognized figure in York, he began to see and to sense the subtle tensions caused by his individualistic position.

It was all under the surface. No casual observer could have noticed it. To all appearances, and to a large measure in fact, his relation with York was one of mutual friendliness, without tension. At no time was there conflict or open opposition. There were no acute turns to his position simply because there were no active or frictional issues in which, opposed to them, he was involved. But he, consciously, and York Beach unconsciously, knew that he was different, that there was a difference between himself and it.

He could sense in the atmosphere and almost hear them asking: "What are you doing here? Are you married? Where is your wife? Where is your girl-friend? Where are your friends? Why are you alone? Where is your car? Why haven't you got a car? We never see you at the movies. We never see you at the dances. You look as though you have money enough to be at a better place. Why are

you here? What are you doing? You are not one of us. Who are you, anyway?"

Antrum devoted much thought to understanding the psychology of the situation. It seemed to him that the stage was set cleanly. In fact, never before had he found himself in a situation of mass and individual so clear of extraneous factors. Here, there were no hostilities, no contentions, no issues, no rivalries, none of the usual preferences and prejudices. He liked them. They liked him. It was a clear-cut proposition, the best experience he had had for observing the reactions and interactions between an individual and the mass.

It seemed to him that the straight fact of his being alone, without evident connections with any of the prevalent forms of life, presented to the people of York Beach an image of a solitary person, an individual, one who is individual *among* men. Not a hermit or a recluse, who may be and most often is a mass-man who happens to dwell physically separate from men, but who, psychologically, is part of them. The true individual is psychologically individualized. He vibrates differently. The mass senses this. How different these vibrations were, if, for instance, they were radically, basically different, Antrum questioned but could not determine. But it was certain that the mass felt his dissimilar vibrations, and that their feeling, though unconscious, was an active energy.

He was a symbol of something different from them. With the quickness and certainty of symbolic understanding, they knew he was different. This led them to question, with a tinge of suspicion, as to who he was. When no satisfactory answers were forthcoming, their vagueness began to fill with suspicions which, in time, would turn to superstitions. In his present circumstance, this latter process would be modified by their mutual friendliness. But the tensions were there. They set up in his solar plexus subtle currents and cross-pulls which would have caused a less conscious and a less individualized person either to leave York Beach or to make quick effort to be included amongst and accepted by the mass as one of them.

He had occasion to notice one very interesting thing; which was, that as long as he, as it were, kept on his side of the fence—they invariably kept on theirs—everything was all right. He could chat

pleasantly with this person and that person about the weather, the water, or what not. And so on. But if he in some subtle or obvious way crossed over into their psychology and really gave them a feeling of himself, if ever so slight, there was immediate and evident disturbance. They would make quick nervous gestures, speak unnaturally rapidly or slowly, or not speak at all. A perplexed look, which they would quickly try to hide, might come on their faces. It was a strange and interesting thing.

In all of this, he tried to make allowances for his own subjective misperceptions and misinterpretations. Nor did he take it all to be a matter of the individual in relation to the mass. Much of it was doubtless no more than specific reactions and interactions between the particular person Nathan Antrum and the particular place York Beach. He was cautious of superimposing ideas on the experience. He was cautious of generalizing. However, here it was, a field of human phenomena, himself in it; and he was trying to observe and understand it.

For Antrum, York Beach came to exist as an entity, as much an entity, in its scale, as Bruce or Alma in theirs. His responses to it were as definite as his responses to them.

One evening at The Shawl he took from his pocket and read to Bruce a note he had written that day:

The sluggish currents in the human world are always flowing; and the people who compose this stream are always in it, in contact with whatever vivifying elements it may contain. This is the collective or mass world. It is fed by physical and sex energies whose main business is to procure and eat food, secure and keep a mate, and reproduce; by pain (not psychological suffering); by wishes which occur in set patterns and which seek nearby objects; by ingrained likes and dislikes; and by groups or clusters of fixed ideas. This is the world of the body. Its mechanics are those of the body, namely, reflex actions, mechanical reactions. It has no continuity, just as physical matter in general lacks continuity. The particles, its constituents, are apparently proximate. They are held together in mass by the force we call life. Life itself is conscious, but, by a strange paradox, these constituents of life are unconscious. This

world moves, but it does not progress, though the idea of progress, the belief in progress, is now one of its fixed ideas. It has no forward motion. It revolves about a fixed point. The people who compose it always live; they never die, and hence they never know what life is.

The vivid currents in the human world are not currents; they are flashes, now on, now off, intermittent; and the people who make them, live while they flash on, and suffer temporary death when they flash off. This is the world of individuals, of individuals in the making. It too is fed by physical and sex energies; by pain. It has these factors in common with the mass world. It has a body. But it is not primarily a world of the body. It is a world beginning to be born above the body. It is the world of form. It experiences psychological suffering. Frequently it experiences more suffering than pain. The patterns of its wishes are more plastic. The wishes themselves are far more energized and tend to seek far off and even impossible objectives. Hence this world progresses. In contradistinction to the collective world which desires pleasure, comfort, gratification, the world of individuals seeks happiness, bliss, perfection. The ideas of the individual world are plastic; they are made active by the functions of thinking and understanding. This is the world of the psyche. Its mechanics are those of the psyche, tending to be active, self-active, rather than reactive. It has a continuity similar to that of the ether. The particles, its constituents, are apparently non-proximate. They are held together by affinity. They are conscious. They are the brain cells of conscious life. This world moves and has forward motion. The people who compose it die often, and hence they know what life is.

Antrum, having finished, looked up from his paper and asked: "Well, Bruce?"

"It is good," said Bruce at once. "I question several statements. But perhaps it is a matter of phrasing. It doesn't matter. I think it is very good. I respond more to the sense of solidity and structure it gives than to the ideas. I don't mean that the ideas are unimportant. I mean I was particularly impressed by its form and rhythm. Perhaps this was because you read it, the way you read it. It was as

if I were getting a whole man, not merely the ideas of a man. When did you write it?"

And Nathan began telling of the concrete experiences in York Beach which had served as material and as stimuli for his formulation.

CHAPTER V

The friendship of Nathan and Bruce had grown and deepened rapidly. Within a week, owing to conditions at York, conditions which suspended or changed the habits of their urban existence and which brought them together as the only two people of their kind at York, they had established an intimacy and set up a kind of essential interchange more free and clear than they had before experienced.

They had become sensitively familiar with and understanding of each other's characteristics; so that their gestures, facial expressions, postures and movements of body, things that formerly, though noticed, were often without clear meaning, now came to have immediate significance. And, as their intuition of each other advanced, each began seeing in the other his basic attitudes and responses.

Bruce, however, and strangely enough, had no clear sight as to the actual forms and progressions of Nathan's deepest inward experiences. For, open though he was, Nathan never or rarely mentioned these. He had a strange way of seeming to tell everything, and in truth, telling a great deal; and yet, somehow, never revealing his inner self. This self, and its experiences were usually, in a rather baffling way, kept out of the picture. So that, after intimate contact with him, Bruce often felt that save for what he guessed and inferred, he had never seen Nathan, the fundamental Nathan. Antrum was intimate, and yet aloof; revealing of himself, and yet strangely completely concealed.

He was not naturally inclined to make confessions. He did not deliberately hold back. He was not consciously on guard lest he reveal himself. He was not intentionally secretive, reserved, aloof. He was just so, by nature. He could, if he thought necessary, make uncompromising confessions. But it was not often he felt the need of this. And, on the other hand, if he set himself against it, the

most agonizing experience could not wring a confession from him. For the most part, he simply never mentioned his deepest experiences. And hence it sometimes seemed that his interior being lived in a world dimensionally removed from the activities of his personality. His projections, when they did come, came from a stark realness.

And so, all in all, Bruce was in doubt, but fascinated, amused, disturbed, interested, and recurrently reconciled to Nathan's behavior. It was an event when Nathan entered the door for dinner. Bruce never knew what kind of temper to expect. He was assured of a basic friendliness; but, within this form, anything might happen.

Half an hour before dinner Bruce usually left his room and went down stairs. And there, seated near a table lamp, he would read a book and wait for Nathan to come in. As seven o'clock drew near, he would frequently glance towards the door. The minute Nathan arrived, he would quickly lay his book aside and look searchingly at him.

Sometimes Nathan would come in in high spirits, his face animated, his movements quick and vigorous. He might have the air of a genial aristocrat. He might be up to deviltry. He might be dramatic, or dominant. He would stimulate activity and tend to make all things take the rate of his vibrations. At other times, his face would be long and drawn, his tall body drooping. He would take a chair and sit in it glum, or looking as if waiting for a chance to satirize something. In such states he could be like a solid weight, unmovable, untouchable. Then he would make Bruce uncomfortable. He would say nothing, but just gaze out, his dark eyes burning. He could sit that way without moving, without speaking, for a solid hour. If spoken to, his responses usually were short, and might have sting to them. He looked like a prince in exile, or like a sardonic philosopher whose system of the universe had been upset or rejected owing to some trifling new discovery.

And then—this was the Nathan that Bruce most deeply responded to—he would be calm, deeply calm, clear, immediate, lyric, tender, exquisitely sensitive, radiating profound well-being, affirming by his very presence that life is rich and sweet with full meaning. His

ideas seemed to come from an innate saneness, a luminous native understanding. Indeed he had a purity which seemed never to have been touched by human experiences. The purity, the simplicity of a new being. Just to see him was to feel faith and hope.

It distressed Bruce that Nathan appeared to undervalue this aspect of himself, to overvalue other aspects, as, for instance, the satiric. He intended to have a serious talk with him on this matter.

One evening after a day of hard work which had made him intense, integrated, dynamic with brilliant life, clear thoughts, and vivid feelings, tensioned in himself and within life, Antrum, a force, entered the dining room. The meal proceeded under a rapid fire repartee between him and Bruce. Then, happening to glance towards the hall, Nathan saw Alma passing. At once he called her.

"Alma!" he called, sharply, but with a gay undertone. "Alma, come here. Come join us."

She turned quickly and looked in their room.

"Come, come," said Nathan.

"I would like to," she said, smiling, and catching his spirit, "but——"

"But what?"

"I've promised Mrs. Galt——"

"I don't know what you've promised Mrs. Galt. I know I want you here. Where is she?"

"Here I am!" he heard Mrs. Galt's voice. Then he saw her look in the door.

"You also," said Nathan. "Come in. We want both of you."

"We were just going——" Mrs. Galt began.

"I don't know where you were going," said Nathan. "The devil take your going. Come in. Here, you see, I will arrange special chairs for you." He sprang up and deftly swung two wicker arm chairs in position so that the two women would be comfortably ensconsed in front of him and Bruce. Bruce was looking on with uneasy amazement.

"There!" said Nathan. "May I escort you?"

He did escort them. He seated them with some ceremony, and then seated himself. He was in a strange state, amusing and yet

serious, easy and yet intense, coaxing and yet commanding. It was evident he was going to have his way.

Mrs. Galt smiled and looked at Alma. Alma smiled and looked at Mrs. Galt. Both looked greatly pleased, but puzzled. They turned to Bruce. But Bruce could give them no explanation. He himself was wondering what would come next.

Alma soon said: "Well, here we are. Now what are you going to do with us?"

"Tell you something," said Nathan.

"Tell us something?" both women asked, smiling, wide-eyed, incredulous that he could say anything to match his state.

"Paint a picture that will transport you into another world. We will, if you like, leave Long Beach and find ourselves in a world just suited to my temper. I do hope your tempers are similar to mine. But if they are not, no matter. They soon will be. Tonight, ladies, and my dear Bruce," and he bowed to them, "I wish to be in a world of brilliant royalty, grand dukes, courtiers, princes, princesses, clever men and alluring women. I wish to be in a great ballroom where intrigues for high stakes are crackling even while we dance and flirt. A brilliant world of a great Empire!"

"I don't like grand dukes," Mrs. Galt objected.

"What!" Nathan pounced on her, "you don't like grand dukes?"

"I come from the middle-west, you see," she said, laughing.

"No, I don't see. Cinderella still lives today. So listen attentively, Mrs. Galt. I am about to give you a picture which the dream of the world responds to."

"Where is your Empire?" she asked, practically.

"Where?" said Nathan. "I don't know. How should I know? I now conjure it. I now build it. I build it as men have built such things. But if you object to imagination, and even to fancy, then let us come to earth and say that it is the Russian Empire at the time of its most extraordinary Tsar. I select Russia because the Russians knew how to mingle love and diplomacy. They knew how to be aristocrats."

"Terrible aristocrats," said Mrs. Galt with feeling.

"Yes, terrible," said Nathan, with more feeling than Mrs. Galt, a swift, deep, dynamic feeling. And then, with a quick change to

a light, semi-cutting tone, he continued: "But my dear Mrs. Galt, how do you expect me to get on with my picture if you sit back on the prairies and just won't come along?"

Bruce and Alma, even Mrs. Galt, had to laugh.

Then Nathan addressed Alma: "You, Alma, you wish to come along? You would like a great hall, brilliant men and sparkling women? Men with power to play the game? Women with sufficient power over men? Where nations meet and are held in palms? Where fortunes revolve and the world sings with the triumphs and defeats of great destinies?"

"I would! I would!" Alma exclaimed, "I want to come along!"

"Ah, Bruce," Nathan addressed him with great relish, "you see? We may still have Empire in America."

Bruce knew that Nathan was playing, but Nathan's whole state, his intense strangeness, made him feel uneasy. He was getting worked up.

"Yes, I see," he replied, batting his eyelids.

Then Mrs. Galt said to Nathan: "I didn't know you were an aristocrat."

"No?" asked Nathan. "Well, now you know it."

"He is joking, Mrs. Galt," said Bruce, seriously.

"Not at all," said Nathan.

Bruce said to the women: "You should hear him tell of his experiences at York Beach."

"Yes," said Nathan, "I can be a democrat. But I am convinced that the world cannot. No sizeable group of people for any length of time. Not so-called civilized people. And I hate democratic pretense. Bah, if men must be ruled by fear and power, give me the clean cruelty of monarchy, the candid exercise of absolute power. I hate the sham—you know it: 'I, the ruler, dear people, am here by your permission and I am doing just what you would have me do." He paused, and then with deep feeling said: "Yes, in being, I am equal. In being I know only pure equality with other beings. But, men being what they are, and I, having my temperament, in the present scheme of things I am decidedly an aristocrat. But perhaps not what you mean by an aristocrat." And his eyes flashed to tell them that he meant what he said.

"Seriously, Nathan," Bruce asked, "do you think monarchy the highest form of government?"

Mrs. Galt said: "What about England?"

Nathan replied to her first: "English monarchy is nothing. It is merely a tool of the upper classes to keep their social status intact. Where would the lords and ladies be if there were no king? But I am not talking of social status. I am speaking of a functioning method of actual government."

To Bruce he said: "Yes, to my mind monarchy is the highest form of government for idiots by idiots."

Alma recoiled and said quickly to herself: "So that is what he thinks of us! Well, I will see that he gets no chance to govern this idiot!"

Bruce asked: "You believe there is a higher form?"

Nathan answered: "Yes, a form for men."

"Plato?" asked Bruce, "Plato's Republic?"

"Higher," said Nathan.

"Pure fancy?" asked Bruce.

"No, pure fact," said Nathan with intensity. "Pure potentiality. Sufficiently real for me to say that I would give my life to help form it."

His idealism struck Alma deeper than his pessimism. She wavered, looked at him. Then with a confused but deep swift feeling she told herself: "He would! He means it!"

Mrs. Galt asked: "Do you think there will ever be an Empire in America, an American Empire?"

"Perhaps, someday," Nathan replied. "If we, and if our present tendencies survive the next war. Perhaps someday when the democratic dogma is less strong in people, and when there comes a man with the genius and the power and the courage to break tradition, overrule his rivals, and declare himself. Ah, but I would hail such a man!"

Alma objected: "But suppose the Empire crushed you. Suppose it tried to crush you?"

Nathan answered: "Then I'd resist it. But it wouldn't. Not the first Empire. Not the first Emperor. Because as a general rule the first Emperors know, and know how to gather about them and

utilize the strongest powers and the best men and talents of their era. In contrast to later Emperors and to pseudo-leaders who know nothing, who gather and utilize nothing, but are used by men or habits stronger than themselves."

"Aren't these dangerous ideas for people to hear?" asked Mrs. Galt.

"No, Mrs. Galt. People will never hear them. Their ears, as organs, are open. But their minds are sufficiently closed and sealed. Yes, a crazy man might hear them. But the government is building each day bigger and better asylums for crazy men."

Bruce abruptly asked: "Seriously, Nathan, if you had to put it in one word, what would you say is America's worst feature?"

Nathan answered without hesitation: "Hypocrisy. Everywhere hypocrisy. From the bottom to the top, north and south, east and west, everywhere hypocrisy. Business everywhere is a skin-game. I'll get you if you don't get me first. This is so the world over, not only in America, but everywhere. Bargaining is at the core of business; and trickery is at the core of bargaining. Some people admit this, and accept it as such. They have, if you can so call it, honest business. But here in America we pretend it is done in the spirit of Christ, for the love and uplift of our neighbors, for high living standards, for progress, prosperity, civilization, and Uncle Sam. The East-side Jews of New York are the only honest business men we have.

"We drink more than France and England combined, but we have prohibition. We care for nothing but money and social position, but claim to be an exemplary moral and democratic nation. We pretend that politics is a clean game, and everyone knows it is thoroughly rotten. We have more sex affairs than occur in all Europe, but are puritanical. We don't give a damn what Christ said, but we have thousands of Christian institutions with their oily piety. We claim culture, and despise it. We claim liberty, and exist in economic, political, moral, and mental slavery. Everywhere hypocrisy. We are so thoroughly hypocritical that we don't know it. We sincerely believe we are honest. One of our best critics put us in a nut-shell when he said: 'If the South can stagger to the polls it will vote dry.' Just so. Everywhere hypocrisy."

"What is our best feature?" asked Bruce.

Nathan answered: "That America allows a man to make himself. To make himself in essence. Here we have the possibility of becoming normal real men and women. How much we use the possibility is another matter. You once asked me to define an American. I didn't then. I wili now. An American is one who is making use of the here existing possibilities of self-development."

Before anyone could comment, Alma arose quickly and said with an unsteady voice: "Really, I think we must be going."

"Yes, yes, of course you must," Nathan cut at her.

And then, relaxing, and smiling mischievously, he said: "You must, I hope you will pardon Bruce. I am sure he did not intend to keep you so long."

"Bruce?" the women gasped, looking strangely from Bruce to Nathan and back again.

"Yes, Bruce," said Nathan. "Certainly. I am sure he had no thought of verbing so much. But you will excuse him?"

He paused, then spoke curtly: "Goodnight! Goodnight!"

The women gave a nervous laugh, shook their heads, and quickly went out.

S. GUY ENDORE

Cataract

For days I had stumbled through the densest jungle I had ever encountered. Companions and baggage lay far behind, lost or destroyed, I knew not which. Torrential rains had made a swamp of this jungle, and at each step the soft mud threw thick lips about my boots and with a reluctant sucking sound gave them up. Lianas strung from tree to tree obstructed my progress, my feet caught in the creepers, and my clothes were torn from me by the thorny mimosa. Above my head a great swarm of gnats in the shape of a bishop's mitre rose and fell with a nice regularity. When I stopped, they stopped, and I could hear their soft buzzing, like anger slow to rouse. When at last I dropped dead they would settle upon me and each little black body so like a bit of soot, would swell with blood into a glowing spark. Meanwhile they rose and fell with maddening regularity, and their mild buzzing infuriated me.

All day I walked on. The sun's heat penetrated through the foliage and from the mud arose an evil-smelling mist. It seemed to me that this miasma seeped into my body and set up a putrefaction within me. Hot white lumps arose where strange poisonous insects stung me. Great dragonflies flew past on stiffly whirring wings. They would settle on my body and bringing forward their tails would probe for a place to deposit their eggs. The thought of a thousand white maggots developing within me and devouring my flesh drove me to slap wildly at those glittering monsters. At night I settled myself as comfortably as possible between the roots of some great tree and prayed for a glimpse of a star-strewn sky. Intermittently I waved my arms above my head to frighten away the mitral swarm of gnats that continued their soft ominous buzzing. At last I would fall asleep to weird dreams.

In the morning my head would be lighter and clearer. When I brushed my face with my hands they would be streaming wet with

blood, and I could feel, like little granules, the crushed and burst bodies of the gnats. The less bold ones still buzzed above my head. Each night I feared this event, and each morning as I awoke I was grateful that it had occurred. The blood-letting relieved me.

One day, the heat and the miasma so overcame me, that I lacked strength to pull out my legs from the mud. For a moment I stood still, in apathy, and I could feel myself slowly sinking. The fear of being engulfed suddenly dispelled my phlegm, and I tugged away violently. Only after much exertion which rendered me quite weak and dizzy, did I succeed in extricating myself. Thoughtlessly I took off my boots and threw them away. How foolish of me to have done so! That very evening, I perceived that some species of infection had communicated itself from the mud to my legs, where a thousand scratches had opened an easy path for the entry of poisons and bacteria. In the morning I found that the gnats had bled me again, and not only were my face and hands covered with their distended bodies, but also my legs. Blood-swollen, the gnats clung to me, unable to fly because of their weight, and I had to brush them off with my hand; their tensely stretched bodies burst at the slightest contact. When I arose to walk, I found my legs very weak, the knees and ankles were puffed out until they were as wide as my calf.

I stumbled on nevertheless, my affliction growing until my legs were like columns straight down, as thick around as my thigh; I walked on, dispirited, without hope, caring little whether or not I ever left this forest swamp. Days may have passed. I remember that walking became a little easier, either the mud was drying up, or my huge feet prevented me from sinking in. Eventually I came upon a small river, and being unwilling to leave the fresh water, and moreover finding walking in it both easy and cooling to my fevered legs, I followed it upstream, expecting it to lead to higher ground. Nor was I disappointed. I remember reaching great fields with rolling hills. The bright sky blinded me. The fresh air intoxicated me. My world so dark and foul was suddenly immense, unbounded, fresh and clear as crystal.

It was evening when I saw the lights of many fires sparkling on the shore. I dragged myself up the bank. My legs were numb, the

puffy flesh had hardened, and the knee-joints were almost immovable. Painfully I approached the fires. Dogs barked and rushed up snarling; they fastened their teeth in the flesh of my legs, and though portions of it came loose, almost split off, like the porous laminated pulp of mushrooms, I felt no pain. Probably I had lost consciousness.

2

They were Central African savages. As an invalid from whom they had nothing to fear they made me welcome in their kraal. I had a little hut, low, dirty, evil-smelling, with rotten débris in the corners that turned my stomach. Food was brought to me; queer strange food, luring with its tempting odor, and forbidding with its mysterious origin. Small luscious white tid-bits, that looked and tasted like prawns proved to be fat grubs, which were dug out from decaying tree-trunks. The only drink they used was one fermented by the use of saliva in an old savage fashion.

Thus I lived and slowly grew accustomed to the diet and habits of the place. My legs, however, refused to heal properly, and a slow melancholia settled over me. Live, yes,—here I could live forever. But what a life!

The woman who brought me my food said something I couldn't make out. She put up her fingers as though to indicate a number, and uttered something which sounded like "ayussee." It may have been a charm, or perhaps a greeting, but I immediately called to mind A.U.C.—*ab urbe condita*—and what a host of sad thoughts it brought to me. How far away I was from the study of history! The years turned back like the yellowed pages of old periodicals. My old textbooks appeared before me, a sad procession of ghosts. I could open them and distinctly recall the pictures; the Parthenon reconstructed; the Pantheon in the days of the Flavian emperors; Augustus in his armor with the little cupid at his leg. I recalled the simple little tales of my elementary Latin books. I remembered the story of the Colossus of Rhodes and how the Arabian merchant carried off all the metal it contained, on the backs of many thousand camels. I had never thought that such childish memories could contain so much pathos. I had never suspected that their attraction

was so great that the idea of my complete severance could sadden me to tears. No doubt it looked ridiculous to the greasy malodorous woman standing beside my cot, to see me turn aside to weep hot tears. She looked a little puzzled and finally left. Perhaps even into her bosom, under those long pendulous breasts, an echo of a feeling she couldn't understand penetrated and disturbed her.

Thus days passed, until half crawling and half limping, I could get out of my hut to the long grass outside of the kraal. There, extended on my back, with the immense sky above me, I would lie for hours at a stretch, filled with my sad thoughts and futile longings, hopes of escape which could never be realized. At intervals little brown sparrow-like birds emerged from the tall grass and executed a short high arc like a parabola, at the top of which they trilled a clear sweet note, and then suddenly changing the direction of their flight, with all their feathers spread and ruffled, they darted back into the grass. Flocks of small birds crossed the plain in all directions. Above, forever soaring and wheeling were the buzzards, and still higher, hanging like grey dots, the carrion vultures circled unceasingly.

Evenings I was back in the hut. Outside, the hunters were returning with their booty. Fires were lit and the odor of roasting meat soon drifted in. Through the chinks came long thin lines of flamelight and rested on the opposite wall. The broad beam coming through the doorway was often broken, as the revellers flung themselves between my hut and the fire. Now, having stuffed their bellies, they had begun to drink, and until late at night there would be noise of shouting and weird singing, and in mysterious interludes of silence one would hear the crackling of the logs in the fire.

My woman came in to give me a bit of meat and some baked fruit. Her eyes were moist and bloodshot. Her torso rested loosely on one hip and from her arms, bent at the elbows, her hands hung limply. She muttered something about "ayussee" and slipped out. It seemed as though they were magic letters to plunge me into the past. I remembered that when I first studied French, my governess wished me to say something which I could not grasp. I remembered it as "silverplate," and it was only much later, when I already spoke French well, that I first connected "silverplate" with 's'il vous plait',

which was, no doubt, what she had wanted me to say. That brought back memories of those days when as a little child we danced around the clipped bushes in the Belvedere Park, singing: 'sur le pont d'Avignon', and 'les blanchisseuses font comme-ci'. Those days surrounded by an aura of pathos, seemed almost legendary; everything was beautiful, even the sad recollections had a charm about them when viewed through the haze of years—— In winter, the glittering Christmas market, where I went wonder-eyed clutching my governess' skirts.—— In summer, when the castania trees were in bloom, and the ground was carpeted with their white and purple blossoms.

Outside the noise raged like a tempest. A picture of contrast rose before my eyes. The squalid village, with its crazy huts and crooked muddy paths awakened in me an intense desire for a clean, straight line. The vertical edge of a house, a stretch of gleaming steel rails, would have been works of art to me. How I longed for a smooth, paved avenue at dusk, after a bit of rain when the lamps are reflected in the wet asphalt. And yet I remembered a time, when I had been among all these things, that I had once happened upon a wooden statuette made by some African savages, and I recalled how restful to my eyes had been the crude simplicity of the thing. Such rudely carved bits were abundant in the village. Even now, a spoon with a long handle worked into the shape of a pregnant woman with enormous breasts and practically no head, lay on the floor beside my cot. I embodied all that I hated in this camp, and it was with great pleasure that I broke it into halves.

The noise outside gradually subsided. Night after night these orgies were held, and as long as food was plentiful and the weather propitious, they would be repeated. As for myself, my legs were now healed, that is the inflammation had gone down, but they were almost useless for walking, being stiff and immovable at the ankle and bending with great difficulty at the knee.

3

I had found not far from the kraal, a cataract where a clear, beautiful stream plunged noisily over a high precipice, and thither

I managed to drag myself in spite of my lameness. Lying beside the water-fall with its continuous thundering in my ears, I spent days full of reveries of former happiness. My chief delight was to allow the noise of the water with its confused but regular rhythm to gradually enfold me until my blood pulsed with it. Then my ears would begin to pick out melodies, remembered or improvised, and from the great rush of waters I would draw the bass accompaniment. Sometimes I could hear full orchestras. The flutes would carry a delightful melody and then the violins would came in with long rapid bowing, and gathering impetus would draw in the 'cellos, and then the great booming bass-viols would enter, and what a bowing and scraping there would be, what a volume of sound; all the instruments would join in and then with a crash it would be over,—I could hear only the gray rushing of the waters. . . .

Now and then, out of the waterfall, I would pick out a song I knew well. Some old piece full of melancholy associations. Often I could not recall the composer. But I would see distinctly the Boesendorfer piano, with the candle-brackets, on each side, brought forward so that their light fell on the music, and a young girl with two long braids of hair drawn back tightly from her forehead, playing from some old Breitkopf and Haertel publication. Thus I would know just about when I had heard it and so could often place it. Best of all I loved Brahms' waltzes. How I mourned my inability to recall all of them! I could not even have them when I wanted. Somehow out of that mysterious conglomeration of tones and rhythms which was the cataract, the correct time and notes would hit my ear and all at once I could sing it. My whole being would pour out liquid into its golden melody.

I lived with music. Each little remembered scrap of melody was infinitely precious to me. And to think that I should never hear them played again, that indeed I was forever cut off from all of the white man's civilization, made me groan and clench my hands with rage. How I despised these stupid blacks, to whom music at its highest was the beating of a tom-tom. What folly induced me to adventure into strange lands! Thus I ruminated when the golden African sunset would come upon me suddenly, and with growing pride and scorn I would limp slowly back to the village, where I

would find the chief Mgoomba squatting on his haunches and staring stolidly into the flame of the campfire. This was his usual occupation while the rest of the tribe were engaged in tasks of all sorts. He would lift his head as I hobbled past and peer at me through his red, watery, smoke-stung eyes.

I hated him. He was ugly beyond words. His features were permanently distorted into an angry scowl; his body was misshapen by nature and further bent and crooked by his age. Disgusting thoughts arose in me when I saw him: the color of his skin was light brown. . . . I had heard it said that the white men went through Africa like great ships over the sea leaving a white wake behind them in the black waters. . . . Mgoomba was the embodied sin of his father. Before these people, contact with whom still made me shudder, my race had stooped to find in them amusement and satisfaction; and when I came from the cataract filled with admiration for the remembered achievements of my people, I saw Mgoomba and was humbled.

He was a symbol, too; a prophecy before which my heart sank with dread. There would be a passage of time and I would forget. My ship of glory would sail away into the fog of forgetfulness. I would be a savage. Even now I could note with a wild fear how nights, while I lay in my hut, the sound of the tom-tom brought the blood surging to my head. Unconsciously I followed the rhythm. I resisted a fierce desire to abandon myself to these savage joys. Drink the fiery, spittle-fermented liquor, and dance with the naked black women; intoxicate myself with the pungent odor of their sweat, tear the cobweb finery from my brain, and shout and scream in frenzied glee.— No, better to lie here and ruminate, to let the joy of life pass me by like a great muddy river flowing past a high-perched castle. What! destroy all these pretty traceries, the silver filigree of delicate bodies and lightly fevered brains. No, rather destroy myself first!

4

The time of feasting had passed. The sky had been clear too long, and its fleecy white clouds, like succubi had dried up the land. The cataract had become a mere dribble and all the music had vanished.

I lay beside the dripping stream and cried for the old melodies that were dead. The slow beat of the falling water was mournful and dreary. The tall green grass was yellowed and the pretty trilling birds were gone. I felt lonesome and abandoned; and in the hot rays of an unpitying sun, I was cold and shivered.

There was famine in the village. Birds and beasts had wandered into more charitable regions, and food was so scarce that the ribs of the mangy dogs were visible under a skin that hung in folds. They slunk about dejectedly, avoiding the inhabitants of the village, and in out of the way corners, groups of them snarled and quarreled over bits of rotten food, or perhaps a carcass of one of their own number who had died of hunger.

At night no fires were lit. No joy-seeking parties assembled to feast and dance. A pall had settled over the village. My legs began to pain me again and I retreated, from a brown desiccated world, into my stuffy hut. The rush walls were kindly to my tears. I remembered how I had lain here months before when all this was strange to me. I recalled with sadness the long days I had spent here in the semi-darkness, while outside the sun rose and the morning noises came to my ears, and I waited throughout the long slow day, till the shadows lengthened and the light grew rosy and faded into darkness, and the campfires were lit, and the crackling logs burst, throwing showers of sparks and flames upwards into the black night. The days of music beside the cataract came back to me, and the hours in the long green grass, and the negress who used to come in, saying "ayussee," and then hurry off to the feasting around the fire. Now she would enter with a meager meal and silently walk out. Small as the rations were, I was never forgotten. Everybody suffered equally. Only Mgoomba, taking advantage of his being chief, filled his belly as before.

5

Lying upon my cot, I thought this over and it seemed to me that I could understand this. Was he not one of my race too? Had I not seen at home men starve while others feasted? Was it not true among my people that he who toiled most got the least reward?

Such thoughts were dangerous for me. Always I had been filled with a keen if hopeless desire to return to my country. A vague possibility had at least fanned my feebly glowing spark of life. And now that I began to think of the evils of my race, nostalgia died within me, and only hatred was left. I hated everything and everybody. I recalled that once necessity had driven me to seek work in a certain place, where on my first day, I encountered an old man who had been there thirty years. Thirty years, I said, to myself. Never had anything so affected me. He had been a mosaic-layer, he told me, and a temporary lull in the demand for men of his trade had led him to apply for work where he now was. He had a family and a steady income was considered preferable. Thirty years,—half a man's life. When I went home that first day I could neither eat nor sleep. I was frightened. Suppose I should be there thirty years from now. I determined to quit at the end of the week, but I stopped work on the third day, for the sight of the old man was too much for me. When I walked out with my slim pay I felt happy as never before. The spectre of thirty years of slavery was gone.

I hated all laborers only a little less than I hated all those who employed labor. I hated slaves and those who allowed slaves to work for them. I hated those dogs who fed from the scraps thrown from the tables they had laid, and I despised those ghouls who fed on the leanness of others. When I saw a building I thought of each brick which must be laid, and of the laborers' rough hands that had laid them. Why, a beggar can deny his God and spit upon the universe, but the worker has surrendered to both. It was this that had led me to flee to a land of dreams, even to this very hut where I now lay and ruminated.—And outside Mgoomba sat alone eating his fill, and round about him at a respectful distance, was a circle of hungry savages and mangy dogs, that looked on soberly and seriously, hardly daring to hope that a share would fall to them.—This is what I had come to. Everywhere before me evil had spread like a pestilence. I grew so despondent that my hatred left me at last and I grew envious instead. I envied all those who could not feel as I felt,—the old mosaic-layer, and Mgoomba. Yes, I envied you, Mgoomba. To you life was bread and you throve

on it. Each day you ate your portion and it nourished you and you inquired no further. But to me life was a cake that I touched gingerly and delicately tasted. It sickened me, and long before my larder was empty I had disturbed and examined each piece.

I must have grown feverish. I saw Mgoomba's smoke-stung eyes above me, and the tears dropped from them onto my face and I could not avoid them. Ayussee came and sat beside me and read to me from the Odyssey, of the lotos-eaters who eat a flowery food. And all the while a slow continuous motion carried me around her in a circle so that I had to shift my eyes to keep them upon her as she bent over the book. This was so tiresome that I finally stopped trying to keep the book in sight and I closed my eyes.—Now I was back in the swamp and the mitral swarm of gnats settled upon my head like the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. The tall grass bowed to me and the stars adored me, and as I walked through the swamp, lips of mud pursed themselves up before me to kiss my naked feet; while the dragonflies flew around me in greater and greater numbers till I could not see through them.—I opened my eyes and saw myself turning slowly around as before and Ayussee still reading, reading, reading. . . .

No doubt I grew delirious. An old story came back to me of a man who had dreamt that he had seen a woman step forth from a tree and close the door of bark behind her. Out of another tree came a man. Both had evening clothes on. They danced in the moonlight for a while and then parted and went back to their trees. The man awoke in a pleasant mood from such a pretty dream. To his surprise he had the same dream the following night. When he had it again on succeeding nights, he grew frightened. He dreamt the same dream regularly each night until he became so frenzied with horror that he dared not go to sleep, lest he see again those two figures in evening clothes step forth from their trees to dance. He killed himself.

This story came back to me, and each time I thought of it, it thrilled me, and I would grasp Ayussee's arm as I circled around and insist on telling it to her. But she continued reading about Odysseus' adventure with Circe, and she would never let me finish. Finally I shouted it to her: He killed himself! Already she was

past me and I had to turn my head around to shout at her again: He killed himself! See, he killed himself! She continued reading and I circled around, around. . . .

Then it seemed to me that Ayussee was far away from me and the distance between us was continually growing so that she was soon so far off that she only twinkled like a star, because she turned the white pages so fast. But still I circled around her, and my path through space was so long that I kept going through the murky darkness for ages. And thousands of miles away Ayussee twinkled and I went steadily on my eternal orbit, slowly, everlastingly. . . .

6

And all the while I was not completely unconscious. I knew that my fever had left me and that the season of plenty had returned. Out beyond the mimosa-wall, I knew that the long grass was green again and the sparrows were launching themselves twittering into the air; but something kept me from venturing beyond the confines of the kraal. Instead I mingled with the crowd around the fire, and I was wilder than any other; madly I leaped through the flames on my distorted legs, and madly I whirled with Ayussee in my arms, smelling the sweat of her black skin and the exhalation of her sex. More avidly than any other I drank from the pot of spittle-fermented liquor, till my senses reeled and shut out from my mind the recollection of the cataract plunging over the rocks with sad music in its spray. And at night, no sooner did I lie down, than I began to circle around Ayussee, who read to me from Perrault's or Grimm's tales, while I continued to go around her in an ever-growing path until she was as far off as a star, and she twinkled only because she turned the white pages so fast.

I know not how many years may have passed. Completely out of my life I strove to shut the sad sweetness of memory, the time before my coming and the melancholic music of the waterfall. Days I sat moodily with Mgoomba, and evenings I caroused. In periods of famine I wandered hollow-eyed about the village and every night I returned to my orbit around Ayussee, while she read to me from some old familiar book.

What was it that made me one day wake up as to a new world? I remember only that I made my way to the waterfall and there cried because the melodies had fled. Only one tune came to me after a long time, an old song from many years ago: Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés.—I saw again the park bench beneath the statue in the niche clipped into the bushes, just at the end of the long row of Sphinxes. An old workman was replacing their age-worn noses with fresh ones. He told me that his father had worked for the greatest sculptor who had ever lived: that was Canova. Such a wave of nostalgia swept over me that I determined at all costs to escape this place. But I saw my withered limbs and I knew that I had wasted my life and strength around the fire. So many years. So many years. Just like the poor mosaic-layer. I shook my head sadly and the tears began to flow again.

The calm evening descended. Goatsuckers darted in the sky and called out their mellow notes. Great moths fluttered about on thick soft wings. The light grew fainter and fainter and the rosy clouds deepened into purple. Between the rifts in the clouds the stars came out, and everything was quiet but for the waters and the occasional cry of the goatsuckers. The chilly nightwinds began to blow. I shivered. In the distance the fires of the kraal, flared up and beckoned with warmth and companionship. From the invisible waterfall the same song came up again, now quiet and soothing: Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés.

ERSKINE CALDWELL

Midsummer Passion

Middleaged Ben Hackett and the team, Cromwell and Julia, were haying to beat hell when the thunderstorm broke on the east ridge. Ben knew it was coming, because all morning the thunder had rumbled up and down the river; but Ben did not want the storm to break until he had drawn the hay to the barn, and when the deluge was over he felt like killing somebody. Ben had been sweating hot before the storm came and now he was mad. The rainwater cooled him and took some of the anger out of him. But he still swore at the thunderstorm for ruining his firstcrop hay.

The storm had passed over and the sun came out again as hot as ever, but just the same he had to throw off the load of hay on the rack. Swearing and sweating, Ben unloaded and drove Cromwell and Julia across the hayfield into the lane. Ben filled his pipe and climbed on the hayrack. Clucking like a hen with a new brood of chicks Ben urged the team toward the highroad half a mile away. The sun was out, and it was hot again. But the hay was wet.

"If God knows all about making hay in this kind of weather He ought to come down and get it in Himself, by Jesus," Ben told Cromwell and Julia.

Cromwell swished his horsehairs in Ben's face and Julia snorted some thistledown out her nose.

Glaring up at the sky and sucking on his pipe, Ben was almost thrown to the ground between the team when Cromwell and Julia suddenly came to a standstill.

"Get along there, Cromwell!" Ben growled at the horse. "What's ailing you, Julia!"

The horse and mare moved a pace and again halted. Ben stood up balancing himself on the hayrack.

"By Jesus!" he grunted, staring down the lane.

An automobile, unoccupied, blocked the narrow trail.

Ben climbed down swearing to Cromwell and Julia. He paced around the automobile uncertainly, inspecting it belligerently. No person was in sight.

"Damn a man who'd stand his auto ablocking the lane," Ben grumbled, glancing at Cromwell and Julia for confirmation. "I guess I'll have to push the thing out of the way myself. By Jesus, if whoever left it here was here I'd tell him something he wouldn't forget soon. Not by a damn sight!"

But Ben could not move the car. It creaked and groaned when he pushed and when he pulled, but it would not budge a single inch. Knocking out his pipe and wiping his face Ben led the team around the automobile through the undergrowth. When he got back in the lane he stopt the horses and went back to the car. He glanced inside for the first time.

"By Jesus!" Ben exclaimed highpitched.

Hastily glancing up the lane and down he opened the door and pulled out a pair of silk stockings.

Ben was too excited to say anything, or to do anything. Still fingering the stockings he looked in the driver's seat, and there to his surprise under the steering wheel sat a gallon jug of cider almost empty. Ben immediately pulled the cork to smell if it was hard. It was. He jabbed his thumb through the handlehole and threw the jug in his elbow. It was hard all right, but there was very little of it left.

"Cromwell," he shouted, smacking his lips with satisfaction, "that's pretty good cider for a windfall."

While he carefully replaced the jug under the steering wheel Ben saw a garment lying on the floor. It was entangled with the do-funnys that run the car. Carefully he pulled the garment out and held it before his eyes. He could not figure out just what it was, yet he knew it was something women wore pretty close to them. It was pinkish and it was silkish and it looked pretty. And there was very little of it. Ben stared open mouthed and wild eyed. It was a pair of pink silk drawers.

The horse was not interested. He and the mare nibbled at the roadgrass unconcerned.

Ben fingered the drawers a little more intimately. He turned them slowly around. Then he looked inside. Then he smelled them.

"It's a female thing, all right, all right, Cromwell," Ben danced excitedly. "It's a female thing, all right!"

Holding the garment high in his hands Ben climbed on the hayrack and drove down the lane onto the highroad. The garment was nice and soft in his hands, and it smelled good, too.

He rode down the road thinking about the drawers. They filled him with the urge to do something out of the ordinary but he didn't know what he could do.

When he reached Fred Williams place he drew up the team. Fred's wife was stooping over in the garden. Ben pushed the garment carefully in his pants pocket.

"Nice day, today, Mrs. Williams," he called airily, his voice breaking foolishly. "Where's Fred?"

"Fred's gone to the village," she answered looking around bent over her knees.

Ben's hand stole in the pocket feeling the garment. Even in his pocket out of sight it made him feel different today.

Hitching the team to the horserack Ben went in the garden with Fred's wife. She was picking peas for supper. She wasn't bad looking.

Watching her while she pulled the peas from the vines Ben strode around her in a circle putting his hand in the pocket where the pink drawers were. Walking around her feeling the drawers he had to spit every step or two. His mouth filled with water as fast as he could spit it out. The woman did not say much, and Ben said nothing at all. He was getting so now he could feel the drawers without even touching them with his hands.

Suddenly Ben threw his arms around her waist and hugged her good and proper.

"Help!" she yelled at the top of her voice, diving forward. "Help!" she cried. "Help!"

When she dived forward both of them fell on the pea vines tearing them and uprooting them. She yelled and scratched but Ben was determined and he held her with all his strength. They rolled in the dirt and on the pea vines. Ben jerked out the pink

drawers. They rolled over and over tearing up more of the pea vines. Ben struggled to pull the drawers over her feet. He got one foot through one drawersleg. They rolled down to the end of the row tearing up all the pea vines. Fred would raise hell about his pea vines when he came home!

Ben was panting and blowing like a horse at a horse-pulling but he could not get the other drawersleg over the other foot. They rolled up against the fence and Fred's wife stop struggling. She sat up looking down at Ben in the dirt. Both of them were brown with the garden soil, and Ben was sweating through his mask.

"Ben Hackett, what are you trying to do?" she sputtered through the earth on her face.

Ben released her legs and looked up at her. He did not say anything. She stood up putting her foot in the empty leg, pulling the drawers up under her skirt.

That was where he had been trying all this time to put them!

Ben got up dusting his clothes. He followed her across the garden into the frontyard.

"Wait here," she told him.

When she returned she carried a basin of water and a towel.

"Wash the dirt off your face and hands, Ben Hackett," she directed standing over him wearing the pink drawers.

Ben did as he was told to do. When he finished washing his face and hands he slapt some of the dirt out of his pants.

"It was mightly nice of you to bring the towel and water," he thanked her.

"You are halfway fit to go home now," she approved, pinning up her hair.

"Good-day," Ben said.

"Good-day," said Fred's wife.

Tracing Life With a Finger

i

It was the middle of the night deep in December. Rainwater had soaked the red earth so that the world might bleed to death. Hurrying cold water dripped through the rotten pine shingles and spattered wet the worn pine floor. The worm-eaten slats under the rusty springs of the bed crashed to the floor and there was I born.

ii

In the barn my father milked the cow in a fog of yellow dust. The sputtering lantern hanging from a nail in the wall held the cow in wild-eyed amazement. The light died out. The cow lifted her foot daintily and churned the hot milk in the pail. My father glanced around and with his heel kicked the cow hard in her belly and glared at me. The tip of his tongue between his clamping teeth was crimson stained with tobacco juice.

iii.

My mother was placing supper on the table and I wanted to help her. I reached for and grasped in my hands the large white bowl of smoking-hot sausage grease. The grease flowed down my open collar and ate into my navel. I yelled. The buttons on my underclothes became hot suddenly like the grease and burned deep red holes in my tender flesh. Only after seven months of pain could I sit upright in bed without screaming with agony.

iv.

In the peach orchard my father had a small apiary. I chucked a rotten peach into one of the wooden boxes and a bee shot from the hive plumb to my eye. I beat my head on the red clay in unbearable torment until my father came and ran with me in his arms two miles or more along a road deep with red dust.

v.

I dashed through the back yard and the barn yard and over the fence and across the orchard. I was barefooted and I stepped on a

rotting peach. A bee stung the ball of my foot. It was three miles to the baseball game and I ran down the railway on one foot and the heel of the other. On the cross ties I ran and walked on my heel and hung the swollen toes over the splintered blistered ties. A foul ball shot on a bee-line to my eye. I fell on my back and got up quickly. Everyone laughed at me. I was stunned but I yelled the ball didn't hit me! The crowd laughed at me louder still. My eye swelled and continued swelling. Later it became blue and later black and finally it closed tightly. I stumbled home lame and blind and hurt. My father did not whip me with the trunk strap.

vi.

All day I had been away from home. It was raining. The drayman said sure you can ride around with me if you'll help carry the boxes. We huddled under the yellow and white and blue striped umbrella all day. My mother and father at home at dinner ate alone and in silence. Supper was ready and my father came down town in search of me. He found me in a general merchandise store cringing on a dry goods box. I had wanted to go home at dark but it was raining outside and black and I was afraid. My father took me home.

vii.

I sat with my mother near the organ on Sunday while my father preached from the pulpit 'way up above us. When he finished preaching and looked down everyone went up and put his hand in my father's except my mother and me. My father never shook hands with me until after his sister fell out of the window and cut off her neck on a hoe.

viii.

In the alley at the back of our house lived an old negro with his two wives. When my father took me walking in the woods we passed the cabin and my father whispered they have only corn bread made with meal and water to eat. The old white haired man smiled and groveled in the red dirt while we passed and I looked over my shoulder at him curiously and pityingly. Afterward I stole from my mother potatoes and mustard and vinegar for them to eat.

ix.

My mother saw from her bed the reflection in the sky of red wind flanned flames. She carried me out into the street and we sat down in the red mud shivering and crying while my dog ran from window to window pawing the glass while the flames ate bare his skin. My father went back after him but before he reached the door the roof fell in. I ran toward the house for my dog but my mother jerked me back in her arms. I wept crying Thor Thor. My dog cried all that night and the next and the next.

x.

Two men were walking along the railroad where there were three tracks. A freight train roared down upon the two men stepping along the cross ties. They stepped aside talking. A passenger train stole up behind them and mowed them down with its keenly whetted scythe and crunched them under its heels.

xi.

My parents took me away and we walked through a large number of cigar factories amid a vomiting odor. Inside red faced men read newspapers and magazines and books in a rapid ceaseless flood of sounds. Outside my parents read window signs in slow grating monosyllables. Brown oily faced children fought one another in the dingy streets with dirty sticks and stones.

xii.

We rode through grove after grove of citrus fruit and my father stopped frequently for oranges. He pealed them with his pocket knife as though they were apples and we sucked the juice.

xiii.

On the shore of a blue bay we lived in a large hotel and went each morning to old cathedrals and each afternoon to the water. My mother loved old cathedrals and my father blue water.

xiv.

We were crossing the bay and someone rocked the launch until water ran in the cabin. A loose breasted woman inside rushed

cursing to the deck shouting who is the God damn fool trying to drown us out here in this ungodly water! In the late afternoon my mother and father took me home roundabout on an electric car.

xv.

We had a large house in a wide valley below two rows of mountains. Around the house with the compass were apple trees and green grass. The sky was clear and blue. It was a kind of heaven.

xvi.

Early each morning I went a mile away to a tutor. Sometimes I went to him and sometimes I ran off to the woods and stayed there all day alone in the trees. Once I stopped at the cemetery and watched old gravediggers at work till evening. It was raining in a wetting chilling drizzle and they let me keep their fire going roaring behind a yellowed headstone. When night began to fall two or three of the newer graves sank in the earth a foot or more.

xvii.

A workman in the quarry behind the ridge was blasted hundreds of feet into the air and I ran over to see him. His wife was there and so were his children. She carried home in his dinner box all of his body she and the children could find. The oldest girl the next morning found a part of his foot and it was interred behind the woodshed in a lard pail that night with the other parts. One of the workmen at the quarry the next afternoon asked my father is it true the world is sure enough round?

xviii.

I had no playmates.

xix.

In the spring we moved to a city and I was put in grade 6-b. At recess we looked through the iron paling fence at the girls playing in their yard. The male teachers walked among us saying gruffly play games don't look through the fence at the girls.

xx.

Next door a girl lived and her name was Virginia. In the summer after supper we hung on the fence and talked to each other till

bedtime. Occasionally I touched her body accidentally and once she had a splinter in her hand. She said I want you to take it out for me.

xxi.

In another city we lived in an apartment house on the ground floor. Street cars crashed through the boulevard two and a half minutes behind one another. The rumbling vibrations rattled the kitchen and dining ware all day and most of the night.

xxii.

My father took me to see a baseball game. We walked. The concrete pavements burned white blisters on my bare feet and the black asphalt streets stuck between my toes.

xxiii.

The older boys and girls in the apartment house planned a minstrel show and I had a part in the last act. We rehearsed the show two weeks after school each afternoon and charged five cents to see it. When the performance started my father came for me and took me home but the show went on without me.

xxiv.

A millionaire lived across the street but I never saw him.

xxv.

The contractor building a new apartment house on the corner lived on the floor above us. In the morning and in the afternoon I played ball in the courtyard with his two little boys and in the evening after supper I played in the basement of the new building on the corner with his little girl. We played there alone until dark each night. When we went down into the basement she said let's play doctor and patient and I said gladly all right let's do!

xxvi.

We moved far away to a village and I helped the postmaster sort the mail from the afternoon train. I sent away for samples of oil and wallpaper and such things and catalogues too and searched the mail bag every day for something addressed to myself. One

afternoon a post office inspector came and the postmaster said you had better stay at home until he goes away. After that day I sent for no more samples or catalogues nor did I ever again go to the post office in the afternoon.

xxvii.

I gathered together all the old cracked and torn intertubes and worn out and cast away automobile tires I could find and sold them for junk. When rubber became scarce I cut air line connections from freight cars standing on the sidings. When I sent the lot away the agent at the depot asked what's in this bag that feels like air line connections say?

xxviii.

On my birthday my father gave me a large new pocket knife. That afternoon I stole into the depot and slashed open two or three hundred bags of shelled red corn.

xxix.

Frances lived in the house at the top of the hill. I passed slowly up and down the street in front of her house but she never came out to see me. Once I saw her leave the grocery store and I followed her on my bicycle. She saw me coming and ran into the church. At the door I saw her crouching behind the organ but I jumped on my wheel and rode away.

xxx.

When I went away to school I visited one night a new friend. We sat up all night drinking two bottles of coca cola and smoking three cigarettes between us.

xxxi.

In a corn field I heard two men talking to each other earnestly. One of them said it's all right for a white man to lay with a nigger woman but I'll be damned if it's right for a nigger man to lay all night with a white woman now is it? I waited awhile but that was all they said.

xxxii.

One evening a drunken girl came to my room and all through the night she lay in my bed while I sat looking at her. My class

mates at night watched with binoculars the windows of the girls' dormitory. She said you can come if you want to but it's not worth it and I never have known what she meant.

xxxiii.

For a week on the top floor of a seven story warehouse a brown limbed girl fed me every day and warmed me at night. She even helped me lick my wounds. When I threw my cigarette butts out the window they fell in the ocean and I could see all the way across it. Then I went away for two years and came back to get her but she was not there and I can't find her now.

xxxiv.

One night I crawled aboard a coaling tramp and begged a man for a job. He heaved a cask bung at my head and shouted get the hell off here you God damn rat! Before the tramp and the man got half way across they went down and no one knows where.

xxxv.

I went to a town where lumber was planed and lay in jail two or three years or more. There was nothing to do at anytime other than listen to a Mexican file his pointed yellowed teeth and feel my growing beard.

xxxvi.

When I broke out of jail I started walking and went almost a thousand miles before I stopped. I was sitting down to rest awhile when I saw a girl running away off. I jumped up running after her. She was naked and hid behind a hill. I lifted the hill in my arms and tossed it over the edge of the world and picked her up tenderly and whispered I have been looking all my life for a girl like you with brown legs and white breasts and hair like gold in sunshine. While she kissed my lips I laid her on a cloud. When I opened my eyes the cloud had floated away and she was gone.

xxxviii.

Ever since then I have been tired. Oh my God how tired I am! The days are long—long. The sun rises quick like a bat out of hell and roosts forever in the sky biting my eye balls with its black gums and the blood of me drips all over the world.

JOSEPH VOGEL

The Wedding

Lou slipped two thick fingers over a green olive, opened his eyes wide, deftly tossed the olive into his mouth and blushed because Sarah pressed her stomach. He turned to his sister Lilian, spat out the pit into his palm, and asked, "Why do girls act that way at a wedding?" Lilian asked, "What way?" Lou got angry; he was a psychologist and he observed girls' behavior at weddings, also on the street, in streetcars, in icecream parlors, in barber shops, in department stores, in the dark, across the street through half-shaded windows, on the tennis court and at the beach. Lilian did not know that her brother was a psychologist. She did not know what the word meant.

The musicians were a group of can-openers. When they began to play *Here Comes the Bride,* Lou observed that Sarah put her hands on her stomach. He took out a small notebook from an upper vestpocket, unhinged and unscrewed his fountain pen and wrote, "At a wedding when the strains of *Here Comes the Bride* wafts through the room, the girls press their bellies. . . . Observation No. 54."

The music died a tortured death. Mr. Seldon ran between the tables, snapped his fingers and shouted, "Wait, the bride isn't ready." The can-openers did not have enough brains to stop at once. The girls looked disappointed. After all you cannot play *Here Comes the Bride* a dozen times and expect emotions in the stomach. Lou wondered what was going on in Sarah's mind; he also wondered what was delaying the bride and bridegroom and what they were doing.

The devil take it, was not that girl opposite him an ugly, unspeakably filthy creature? Such large eyes, each without warning plunging into the bridge of her nose. Only a mother could love such

a nose. The filthy creature! That made the sixth olive she gobbled within the last two minutes.

Meanwhile Mr. Seldon, master of ceremonies, ran between the tables, dashed to the musicians to give last-minute instructions, shouted to Ben across the room, "Are the maids ready?" strutted aimlessly but as though on a mission, stuck his thin head into the bride's chamber and reappeared like a ghost on Passover.

Lou spat out the pit of another olive with disgust. There would be no Mr. Seldon at his wedding. And there would be no such crowd. A plague on parents who want to show off their daughter's alliance before an unselected assortment of hungry pigs. He would not be able to endure the dirty jokes. A sacrilege. A wedding . . . something sacred for two, so why the display of mating? Show-offs! that's what women are. "Here, you unmarried women, take a look. I've got my man now; laugh that off. In several hours I'll know what you're not supposed to know. You foolish and ignorant virgins, look, look, and imagine the rest. Oh, how happy I am tonight!"

Lou looked at the crowd. A lascivious mass of quivering flesh anticipating another sensation. After the ceremony they would guzzle and stuff themselves with chopped liver, noodle soup, fish and roast chicken, and would fill in momentary gaps with lewd jokes about the newly married pair. Filth of the earth, five stomachs at a table, at a place where two people will be married. Foul! Lou looked at the girl opposite him and felt like spitting on the waxed floor. The filthy, despicable creature! Still nibbling olives. What would be left to go with the roast chicken?

Mr. and Mrs. Wichman sat at table No. 4. Mr. Wichman was as fat as his wife and Mrs. Wichman was as fat as her husband. The soft lights, the waiters in evening clothes leaning against the buff walls, the crowd of at least a thousand—no, about two hundred, the sweet music, the light laughter, all brought tears to Mrs. Wichman's eyes. She leaned close to her husband and laid her fat hand gently on his fat knee. "Look," she said, "how fine, how lovely everything here is. Look how nice; a blessing on parents' heads, who make such a nice wedding for a child. Morris, what do you say? Isn't it refreshing to your heart? Everything so nice, so

many flowers, so many friends, such refinement, such a fine place, five people at a table. Oh, Morris, I'm telling you, let our child be in good health and grow up a beautiful daughter! We'll find a fine young man for her. Morris, we'll make a wedding for her, it will be a delight in our hearts, so many friends, in a nice hotel, a lovely child, oh, Morris, Morris. . . ."

"Foolish wife, what are you crying for? Wait, wait, Tsipi is still a child. Wait until she gets married . . . then you'll cry."

Mr. Wichman settled into a black mood. A wedding? This, a wedding? Well, why not now? Why wait? A dark year on everybody! When would they start the wedding? His stomach itched like two black cats scratching varnish off a parlor floor. Why did they send him an invitation? Was he their friend? Were half the people here their friends? Ah, only good chicken would make up for the delay.

When Mr. Wichman caught Mrs. Klein's eye across two tables, he opened his mouth and then quickly closed it, strangling an error in the nick of time. He had almost said, "May God grant your child a wedding too."

Mrs. Klein, at table No. 6, had no children. Tonight she was very observant. Mrs. Hoffman, the bride's mother, would soon see her daughter married off. God grant the young couple a happy life! Mrs. Klein had no evil thoughts against them. If God would give her a child, she and her husband would be happy too. She would make for it a wedding with music, flowers, songs, diamonds; she would sprinkle diamonds on the floor for her child to walk upon to the canopy, she would kiss everybody in joy—how fortunate to be a mother! A coldness filled Mrs. Klein's heart. At times she felt it was futile to go on living without children. She loved God, but God was cruel to her. Look at Mrs. Hoffman, a blessing on her. Her daughter would be married in a few minutes. Look at her, how she runs from one table to another, greets everybody, smiles and laughs, wishes parents a good life and their children a happy marriage. Look how she bubbles over, how her breast heaves . . . see the glow on her cheeks, the trembling of her hands. "Mrs. Sitren, your daughter's marriage, soon, soon, God grant, God

grant," and Mrs. Hoffman hastens to another table, trips over her own feet, turns around, sees everything and sees nothing.

Mrs. Klein's eyes brighten. Her friend has espied her and is coming toward her. Before Mrs. Klein has time to utter a word, Mrs. Hoffman kisses her on the mouth and says, "Be happy tonight, my friend. God will yet grant you your wish, and you too will be as joyful as I. God is good, my friend, he will grant you your wish and I will live to attend your child's wedding." And Mrs. Hoffman hastens to other friends.

"Hello, Sarah darling, are you enjoying yourself, my child?"

"Yes, thanks, Mrs. Hoffman. I certainly am. When will the ceremony start? I'd like to see Yetta. She was beautiful today!"

"It'll start soon, Sarah, soon, right away," and Mrs. Hoffman hurries on her way again.

Sarah's thoughts had been interrupted. She had glanced at Lou and when their eyes met she saw a look of disgust in his face. That miserable, selfish wretch! That rotten egotist! Look of disgust. Disgusted with her! Damn snob! She knew Lou. Called himself a psychologist, eh? Psychologist, hell! She knew the skunk. He wouldn't play any more tricks on her. She should have told her mother about that night after the party. And he disgusted! The filthy scum! Wait, she'd get him good yet; some day she'd get that hypocrite. Writing notes, eh? He'd write notes at his mother's deathbed. Sarah almost wept with vexation. To be insulted by such vile scum, the idea! One day he told her in a fatherly way that she was suppressing her sex and was therefore hysterical. On the following night he continued with his psychoanalysis and soon became so concerned about her hysteria that he tried to restore her health. She almost let him succeed—but grew frightened just in time. Thank God! To let Lou enjoy her body . . . oh, the thought of it! Sarah held back her tears. Once she loved Lou. Can you imagine? She had loved Lou. Now she hated him for his hypocrisy, for his snobbery, for his false laughter—the strains of *Here Comes the Bride* relieved her as a shower relieves a man in sweat.

Mr. Seldon stood six feet high in the central aisle. His moment, his justification for having lived thirty-six years, had finally come.

He snapped his fingers three times, sending a discord of shattered bones through the hot room. The musicians stopped playing. A bridesmaid and groomsman were supposed to appear, but had evidently missed the signal. Mr. Seldon snapped his fingers once. A door behind the musicians opened and out stepped a girl with a flushed face and a man with a straw hat on his head. Mr. Seldon snapped his fingers twice; two hundred necks stretched and the musicians again began to play *Here Comes the Bride.* As the young woman and the young man walked into the aisle, another couple followed, and then still another couple. Finally, finally, oh! for a look at the bridegroom. "Come on, one, two, keep in step, music there, music there, slower, slower . . ." snap, snap . . . "straight ahead, one, two, one, two . . ." until six pairs of girls and young men stood in two rows down the central aisle, opposite each other, all the way down to the platform, canopy and chief rabbi. Snap, snap . . . no more music. Snap, snap, snap . . . "What's the trouble up there?" Snap, snap, snap . . . Mr. Seldon's head darted upward three more inches. "Flashlight, this way, flashlight." A thick stream of white light pierced the room and flooded the musicians in glory. Snap! a loud, finger-cracking snap. Bang, clash of cymbals, *Here Comes the Bride,* and out stepped the bride with her old feeble grandmother at her side. Two hundred necks arched forward and three hundred and ninety-nine eyes bulged from their sockets . . . snap, snap, snap . . . the bridesmaids raised their arms, the groomsmen raised their straw hats, and under the arch formed by maidenly finger-tips touching manly straw brims marched the grandmother holding the bride with one hand and a burning candle with the other. Everybody forgot everybody. Everybody saw the bride Yetta, pretty fat Yetta, self-consciously all aglow, self-consciously appearing unperturbed, self-consciously smiling just a little bit. Everybody saw a grandmother, small, shriveled, feeble, leading her grandchild into marriage, thinking, "I've lived to lead my little one to the canopy."

"Look, oh, look, how beautiful!" a burst of joy from many maidens' lips. Behind the bride and her escort walks a little boy with Buster Brown hair, holding a white cushion in his arms, and a ring studded with diamonds reposing complacently in a little dent on

the cushion . . . a ring studded with tiny diamonds sending blue and white sparks of their egos into the glare of flashlight, nevertheless unconcerned about any fuss, nevertheless content with their sparkling egos.

Snap, snap, Mr. Seldon has such a smile on his face, and yet he has no smile; so far as he knows, he has no smile. Mr. Seldon thinks life almost worth living, and how! Snap, snap, out steps the bridegroom surrounded by his soon-to-be father-in-law and mother-in-law. A tremulous wave of girlish sighs gently makes its way over the uncharted seas of the room; a longing for what, drenches each girl in a hope for what? Lou fumbles nervously in his upper vestpocket, pulls out his notebook, puts it on his knees, unhinges and unscrews his fountain pen and writes, "At a wedding, each unmarried girl associates her individuality with that of the bride, imagines the bridegroom about to become *her* husband, and is overwhelmed with excited expectancy. (Develop later.)"

The bride and her old feeble grandmother, the little boy with the white cushion and marriage ring, and the bridegroom with his escorts march slowly under the long arch of arms and straw hats until they arrive at the canopy and the chief rabbi.

Snap! snap! fingers crackling into the hypnotized peace of the room like a streak of lightning into the contentment of a cathedral on a main street.

The musicians obliviously continue to ply their happy art and Mr. Seldon snaps, "Musicians, stop!" The musicians stop. They look insulted. The pianist leans close to the drummer and whispers, "Say, what does that guy take us for, a bunch of dogs?" The drummer looks like he wants to whack the cymbals.

Everybody is waiting for what comes next. Mr. Seldon looks around, does not find what he is looking for, then raises his eyebrows ever so questioningly and says, "Miss Shenier?"

Suspense lets out a death-rattle. Everybody knows who Miss Shenier is. She sings to people whenever she gets the chance, and people always say, after she has finished singing, "She hasn't got such a very bad voice at that."

Mrs. Wichman puts her fat hand on her husband's fat knee. "That's nice, I should live so. How nice! Flashlights, a chief usher,

such a darling baby to carry the ring, and now singing. Morris, I'm glad I came, as I sit here."

A mountain that was once young moves down the side aisle to where the musicians wait, a mountain with pink cheeks, sparkling eyes, red hair, baloney arms, moves like a greenhorn on a taut wire stretched between the tops of two skyscrapers. The musicians bend their heads and steal a smile.

Miss Shenier faces her audience, forces her bosom to her chin with an inhalation prolonged until some people gasp for air, blows out a miniature hurricane, twists her head and nods to the pianist. The pianist runs off a bit of counterpoint, and just when his playing becomes interesting, the mountain is transformed into a gaping, ferocious volcano.

"It can't be Irving Berlin," says the girl sitting opposite Lou.

"Doesn't sound like Berlin," says the girl sitting beside the girl opposite Lou.

Lou's face is twisted with agony. He has a feeling that the dozen olives he ate will soon scatter over the floor. What unforgivable stupidity! The name of Irving Berlin to desecrate the memory of Schumann. What sacrilege here tonight! A cement mixer grinding out Schumann into a dirty wheelbarrow audience as if the notes of his song were chipped rocks.

"Buddy, what's the name of that song?"

Lou turns around and says, "The Fountain, by Bach."

"Oh! Thanks a lot." The thanker turns to the woman beside him and whispers, "The Fountain, by Bach."

"That's right," says the woman.

To Mrs. Klein the singing is sweet and soon she no longer hears Miss Shenier as her thoughts and emotions enter another world. She no longer sees anybody; now she fondles her child, a child the image of its father and mother, distinct and chubby, with spurts of laughter as its mother tickles its sides, kisses its mouth, its belly, its little fat legs, its toes, and rolls it around, cuddles it to her breast glowing with warm love, caresses its ears with "You're my little baby, my little baby . . ." Mrs. Klein presses her child to her, hugs it until the finest vessels in her lungs cry for air. . . .

A thunderclap of palms against palms rends and mutilates Mrs.

Klein's world. She raises her head; her eyes are dark valleys. She sees people, people here, there, everywhere. She sees a thick ray of flashlight cutting the yellow dimness of the room; she sees a turning of bodies and hears a scraping of chairs; she sees a canopy, Yetta, the bridegroom, the chief rabbi with his high black hat—Mrs. Klein is at a wedding.

Snap! "Turn the flashlight here, turn it on the canopy." The white, quivering, living beam of light gropes along two walls and finds the canopy. Four men grasp the four poles that hold the canopy high. Under it stands the rabbi. The bride and her grandmother march beneath the canopy. The bridegroom and the bride's parents follow with solemn faces. Then the escorts step aside. Nobody crowds around the canopy so everybody can see the ceremony. Mr. Seldon did not shout, "Stay in your seats, please;" but the wedding guests know that if they make so much as a move, Mr. Seldon will shout, "Stay in your seats, please." The chief rabbi's brisk black beard supports importance in his docile face and his eyes sparkle with remembrance of priestly blood. A prayer in mellifluous Hebrew flows from his lips and wanders from ear to ear, almost dying as a stranger dies in a strange land. "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; we bless you out of the house of the Lord. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Serve the Lord with joy; come before him with exulting." The grandmother has tears in her eyes as she directs her little Yetta of a granddaughter slowly around the bridegroom . . . a girl about to taste life directed by an old woman at this moment not tired of life . . . once around the bridegroom, twice around the bridegroom, and thrice around a man rapidly metamorphosing into a husband. "He who is mighty, blessed and great above all beings, may he bless the bridegroom and the bride."

"The wine, the wine."

Mrs. Sitren stretches out her arm, the rabbi takes the goblet gently from her fingers, recites sonorously, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine," and sips the red wine. He hands the goblet to the bridegroom, who takes a sip; the bridegroom hands the goblet to the

bride, who takes a sip, and back to Mrs. Sitren goes the wine. The chief rabbi gives birth to many Hebrew strangers, and yet not total strangers, because Shloimeh, Mutka, Yankov, Yussel, Avrum, Mendel, Duvid and Hershel, having prayed in Hebrew forty years and repeated prayers for the dead for twenty years, welcome the Hebrew words . . .

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הָעֲרָיוֹת. וְאָסַר לָנוּ אֶת הָאֲרוּסוֹת.

. . . with the warmth of a *melamed* exclaiming, "Next year in Jerusalem!"

"Where is the little boy? Here, you little darling, bring the ring over here. Isn't he cute?"

The bridegroom picks up the ring from the cushion and Mrs. Hoffman bursts into silent tears. "I have lived to see my daughter married, only yesterday she was a little child, oh, God give her a happy life, God grant both of them a blessed life!" But nobody sees Mrs. Hoffman because everybody is looking at the bridegroom. He has slipped the ring on the forefinger of the bride's right hand, he has uttered the first word of the prayer . . . a wave of fear dashes across the room. Has he forgotten, heavens! has the bridegroom forgotten the prayer? The bridegroom's blood bursts from its dam and floods into his neck and face. To himself he repeats, *"Haray . . . haray . . .* damn the luck, what follows after that?" Mutka, under his breath, says, "A shame! A Jewish son who does not know a few simple Hebrew words."

The brisk black rabbi's beard bristles with impatience. *"Haray At!"* he says sharply and concisely.

"Haray At," repeats the bridegroom.

"Mekodesheth!"

"Mekodesheth."

"Lee Betabaath!"

"Lee Betabaath . . . Zo Kedath . . ."

Swift expectancy fills a disgraced race, swift desire to applaud. The bridegroom remembered, he remember two words, he . . . but, but why does he hesitate . . . ?

"Moshe Veisrael!" steel words from between the rabbi's soft lips. *"Moshe Veisrael!"* quickly repeats the bridegroom. Can it be that there is a twinkle in his eyes? He almost lets out a whistle of relief.

Five girls titter and the rabbi produces a marriage contract from somewhere. He adjusts rimless spectacles on his nose, bends back his head, does something or other with his eyes, then clears his throat and reads in Hebrew to the effect that on such and such a day of such and such a month, according to the Jewish reckoning, here in the city of New York, Albert Loranz, son of Shmendel Loranz, said to the virgin Yetta, daughter of Meyer Hoffman: Be thou my wife in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel, and I will work for thee, honor, support and maintain thee, in accordance with the custom of Jewish husbands, who work for their wives, honor, support and maintain them . . . and, besides, provide they food, clothing, and necessaries, and live with thee in conjugal relations according to universal custom. . . .

In answer to a quiet request for wine, Mrs. Sitren, whose parents were moonshiners in Warsaw, places a goblet of red wine into the rabbi's grip. Wherewith the rabbi offers a prayer to the Creator of the Vine, sips from the goblet, then hands it to the bridegroom who drinks like a hero returned from war, exhausted but triumphant. Yetta, remembering her skepticism that afternoon when Leah spoke about drinking wine under the canopy, and also remembering her sudden dread of an unknown wrath when her father explained, "One cup for joy, one for sorrow; by drinking from them you show your willingness to share both,"—revenges her lack of faith by swallowing almost all the wine in one swift and tremendous gulp. The guests are tickled with delight at this manifestation of Yetta's appetite, and exclaim, "She'll make some wife!" . . . "Ah, she'll drain her husband to the dregs!" Nevertheless the rabbi continues with the seven benedictions, despite the rising volume of amusement; before the climactic Hebrew words skip from the rabbi's mouth, the cry goes around, "The glass, the glass, give the bridegroom the glass."

The bridegroom takes a little glass wrapped in a handkerchief, looks intently at it, smiles, places it on the floor, raises his right foot, clenches his fists and brings down his foot heavily on the

little glass . . . CRASH, his aim has succeeded where only a short while ago his memory failed.

"Mozzeltoff!"

"Mozzeltoff!"

"Mozzeltoff!"

"By your children!"

"And by your children!"

"Next year, your daughter!"

"And your daughter, too!"

"Mozzeltoff!"

"Mozzeltoff!"

And Mr. and Mrs. Albert Loranz kiss.

Noise of rejoicing explodes, but Mr. Seldon's head pops above all heads and he blows a whistle, stabbing a knife into the heart of merriment. "Quiet, please. ATTENTION! THE RABBI WILL FAVOR US WITH A SONG. Quiet, please, over there."

The chief rabbi smooths his brisk black beard two times, wipes his lips with a white silk handkerchief, coughs, looks grim and then squeezes out the first long note of a song unaccompanied by music. His eyes are closed, held shut by a fierce determination. He is singing Ave Maria, and those who know Ave Maria know that he is twisting, damaging, impromptuing, betraying, circumcising Ave Maria. His voice staggers to a high peak, trembles on a precipice and dashes to safety on a lower level. Singing Ave Maria, he has become a composer of his own song, with fancy frills, drawn-out passionate flat notes, broken fragments of Rosh Hashonah chants, whirling scale exercises, adjusting melody to the desperate sadness of his mood, enforcing an hiatus with acute sobs, endeavoring by contours and intervals, by progressions and harmonies of a spiritual accompaniment, by every manipulation possible to the larynx, to intensify from moment to moment the expression of his solo.

An increasing hunger emanates from the numerous bodies in the room—not the hunger of the Jewish race, not the hunger of a suppressed people for freedom, not the hunger of lone souls in wild places, but a hunger elicited and sharpened by the rabbi's singing.

The chief rabbi gasps a last desperate flat, wipes the tears from

his eyes, while the guests wildly applaud and simultaneously forget.

Now everybody laughs and feels happy because everybody is going to stop being hungry. Some kiss the bride, but Mr. Wichman interrupts Mrs. Wichman in the midst of "Morris, how nice, how fine . . ." to indicate what is on his mind by patting his stomach. Mrs. Wichman does not know whether or not to be afraid, because she knows that her husband has fasted all day and she knows that even if he eats all day he is always hungry.

So stomachs having become vacuums suck in the aroma of hot food as chopped liver and eggs perform an entrance. Next on the program comes noodle soup to form interior oceans for *gefulta* fish to frolic in . . . then, ah! roast chicken, a dripping delight even to the Uncircumcised.

Mr. Wichman is making everybody at his table laugh. Just because Mrs. Sitren is on a diet does not mean that her food should go to waste; so Mr. Wichman makes short work of her temptations. Mrs. Sitren laughs so much that she feels the pounds rolling up in her anyhow. "Ah, ah!" sighs Mr. Wichman as he pushes another empty plate away. "How can you be so cruel, Mrs. Pollicove? Are you leaving over your chopped liver to give the waiter extra work? Here, let me show you what a good heart I have . . ." and as Mr. Wichman saves the waiter extra work, Mrs. Pollicove loses control and engages in a marathon of laughter until the veins on each side of her nose turn purple and she gasps like a fish in a desert. The merriment spreads over several more tables and everybody watches Mr. Wichman's furious and yet indifferent mastication. But Mrs. Wichman is suffocating with embarrassment. Every once in a while she sneaks a pinch into her husband's fat knee and out of the side of her mouth whispers, "Pig! Where do you think you are, at home?"

Sarah studies the countenance of Yetta, who is sitting beside her husband at the long table of honor. "She is happy now," thinks Sarah. "Married at last." Disturbing thoughts plunge into her mind. "Will I ever get married? Will I be an old maid?" but she hurls them from her with a shudder. "Yetta certainly made a match

in record time. She's clever. She'll make a good wife." Sarah notices that Yetta's eyes suddenly narrow, the joy escaping from them. "Wonder what's she thinking about. Maybe . . . but that shouldn't scare her. It certainly wouldn't bother me."

Yetta, glancing about the room, had seen Jacob's sullen face. She quickly turned her head away. She thought, "What's Jacob looking at me that way for? He's foolish if he expected me to kiss him." Yetta looked at her husband. Her mind flooded with thoughts of him and of a later hour; she saw her departure, saw herself close to her husband on the train, saw herself leave the train in a nearby city as they had secretly planned, saw herself looking unconcerned as her husband registered Mr. and Mrs. Albert Loranz at the hotel, saw. . . .

"What's on your mind?" asked her husband.

She laughed, and said, "I'll tell you later."

Jacob sat at table No. 24 with four people who were strangers to him. The only person at this wedding whom he knew was Yetta. He had not wished to come in the first place, even though Yetta invited him several times over the telephone. But at the last moment he changed his mind. When he appeared at the hotel, he sent up a note to Yetta, a foolish and impertinent note it now seemed to him. A few moments later Yetta's father appeared, led him to the ballroom, found a seat for him at table No. 24 and left him to his fate.

Jacob regretted having come. He had watched the wedding with indifference. When the ceremony was concluded, a line of friends, men and women, formed, and each passed the newly married pair, congratulated them, and kissed Yetta. Jacob, without knowing why, entered the line. He regretted having done so when he saw that the men, also, kissed Yetta. He decided not to kiss her. Then they were face to face. Yetta looked at him coldly. She drew back her head when he bent forward to kiss her. As he mumbled his felicitations he was certain that a smile fled across her lips. "What a fool I am. What in the world prompted me to try to kiss her? I know. I thought she would feel hurt if I didn't kiss her as everyone did. That's how a man makes a fool of himself. What I mind least is her drawing away from me. But how can I excuse my foolish

move, my trying to kiss her, especially when I decided not to do so? Well, that's the least of my worries."

Jacob's memory flashed a picture into his mind: the night he visited Yetta, scarcely four months ago. He went to her house to hear her play the piano. Her parents soon retired and left them alone. The night was warm, so they took seats on the long divan in front of two windows, in a corner of shadows. It all started when Jacob began to practice his French. What in the world had led him to ask whether or not the noun kiss, in French, was pronounced differently from the verb to kiss? She answered with two examples: "I want a kiss" and "Would you like to kiss me?" explaining, needlessly, that there was no difference between the pronunciations. He, like a fool, exclaimed, *"Certainment."* And she, *"Pourquoi pas maintenant?"* He saw it clearly now; it was her southern blood, her hot blood. She approached him, hovered over him. He, to be kind, said, *"Asseyez-vous sur mon ....."* He did not know the French word for lap. But Yetta knew what he meant and she sat down on his lap. "Your poor legs," she said, and smiled. "Oh, don't worry about my legs," he said, and smiled. "They're strong . . . yes, strong," and he forced a laugh. He wondered what was the matter with him. Here was an excellent opportunity, and he found himself hopelessly cold. He tried to shake himself internally into a proper mood; he put his arm around her large waist; he turned his face toward hers, bravely pressed down her head until their lips met, until he felt her lips burn into his; but he could get no response from his body. She perceived his coldness at once and looked at him with pity. He laughed. "I guess I'd make a poor husband for you, wouldn't I?" She didn't answer. She kissed him again, and as she pressed deeper into his lips, he opened his eyes to look at her face. Suddenly she opened her eyes also. He closed his, quickly—but she had seen his cold glance. She rose from his knees and seated herself resignedly in a nearby chair. He became humorous and told her that he was born too far north, that his corpuscles were icicles and that he thought no woman would be happy with him, unless she too were cold.

Yetta was brilliant. He saw by her expression that she did not

believe a word he had spoken. He saw a girl insulted, the woman in her wounded for having failed to arouse him.

When he walked away from the house that night, he thought, "Well, that ends it. I've got no use for a girl who is mad for a husband. God, why pick on me? Of all types, I can't stand hers. Too fat, too fat. Brilliant, yes—but a fellow wants a wife for other things too, he wants to admire his wife; no, he wants . . ." Jacob lit a cigarette, coughed, walked home trying to think of something else, yet worried, conscious of having committed a grievous error.

Now he sat in the ballroom. Yetta was Mrs. Loranz. "Wish her all the luck in the world. Brilliant girl. Take a smart man to match her in wits. Certainly found a husband in record time . . . to be expected. But why did I try to kiss her, why? What a foolish move! Couldn't I just have congratulated her? Of course she would draw away. But, why, why . . . ?" Jacob lit a cigarette, coughed, sat amid the noise trying to think of something else, yet worried, conscious of having committed a grievous error.

Mr. Wichman has finished eating, the dishes and the tables have been cleared away. One little long table remains in a corner of the room, and here sit the chief rabbi, at the head, and Shloimeh, Mutka, Yankov, Yussel, Avrum, Mendel, Duvid, Hershel, and the old, feeble, wrinkled, bearded man who spends his days and nights reading the Talmud in the Old Synagogue by the light of two tall thick candles. They sit at the little long table, recounting tales, laughing, asking questions from memory of the Talmud, applauding the rabbi's answers with *"Gut, er ken es taki, er ken es.* Good, he really knows it, he knows." Here Hebrew words and phrases find a home, hospitality and eager hosts. Wine glasses are filled, the rabbi raises his and blesses the Maker, not in the brisk sharp tones he uttered during the ceremony, but in the soft, warm tones of a religious man about to enjoy the softness and warmth of fruit of the vine. Eyes gleam. Each understands and is understood; each sips the wine with delicacy; each knows that there will be song, that there must be song, that hearts will beat rhythms to words, that the body will soon participate in a festival of brain song, mind song, stomach song, arm song, thumb song, leg song, old song,

young song, folk song. A rhythm takes possession of these men, a rhythm of the life they used to know and prefer to know, a rhythm each moment growing more marked, manifesting itself, passing from feet through legs, through stomachs, through chests into the brain until restraint is no longer possible, no longer endurable, and the rabbi raises his hand instinctively, closes his fingers, sticks out his thumb and burst out gently, lowly, softly, "Yi, dee-dee daie, daie dee-dee daie," and eyes sparkle, lips smile joyously, fingers beat time on the table, bodies sway, and the tune, no one cares where it will lead, is taken up by each throat, gently, lowly, softly, a tune too precious, too long awaited to consume at once, to enjoy to the utmost too soon, a tune to be treated like young love, like a love whose end is near. There is an increase in volume, a singing now no longer controlled, yet controlling itself, regulating itself, carrying its creators along in an even tempo, a similar volume, enjoying a tenor here, a bass there, and all pitches in between everywhere. Who cares now, who cares what will follow later, tomorrow, next year, who cares? "Dee-dee dee-dee daie daie, oye! oye! yi ha-dee di-dee daie daie," thumbs go up, thumbs go 'round, thumbs go down, heads to one side, heads to the other side, song of the heart, song of the lips, "Oye! oye! daie dee-dee daie," voices rise, "ya-dee da-dee daie," until the rabbi, Shloimeh, Mutka, Yankov, Yussel, Avrum, Mendel, Duvid, Hershel and the old wrinkled, bearded Talmud reader are no longer ten singers—until the rabbi, Shloimeh, Mutka, Yankov, Yussel, Avrum, Mendel, Duvid, Hershel and the old wrinkled, bearded Talmud reader are one man, one body, one brain, one voice, one joy, one rhythm, singing as only the soul can sing, singing as only the happy can sing, singing and singing as they are singing.

There is not enough and there is enough and the chief rabbi knows what is enough, so he stretches outward his arms and pushes the song to a gradual stop on the crescendo's end of a "daie dee-dee daie," pushes the song to a stop with moist palms, with the tender regard of a father who knows to end his children's game while it is still fresh in the mind. There are no words now, only inarticulate sounds from drunken throats, inarticulate joy from drunken bodies . . . but before an eye's gleam fades, the rabbi raises his right hand,

closes his fingers, sticks out his thumb, grins broadly and begins with another song, begins with Yizmach Moisheh, singing the first words alone, singing as beautifully as he sang Ave Maria murderously, singing

Yizmach Moisheh,
Oye!
What did—
She get him into,
What did—
She get him into?

then raising his arms as Shloimeh, Mutka, Yankov, Yussel, Avrum, Mendel, Duvid, Hershel and the old wrinkled, bearded Talmud reader raise their arms, closing his fingers as they close their fingers, sticking out his thumb as they stick out their thumbs, and all bringing down their arms, elbows out, thumbs leading, in a circle from ear outward, downward, inward, upward to ear again, in time with

Yizmach Moisheh,
Oye!
What did—
She get him into? . . .

What . . . what . . . uneasiness . . . what is the trouble . . . what is happening? There is a gradual hesitation, a fumbling, a struggling, a suffocation in their singing. A vague note of discordance creeps into their midst, a foreign spirit teases and cools their ardor as wheezes, sighs, mimicries, profanations, thunderous bolts of syncopation screetch, moan, bellow and scamper through the ballroom, dragging the singers by the throats from warmth into coldness.

The rabbi turns his head and his face clouds with disgust. If he were elsewhere he would spit out the sudden venom in his heart. A mass of entwined youth struggling, toddling, hugging, confronts his gaze; a mass of conglomerated youth quivering under the hypnotism and voodooism of violet jazz.

"What is this?" the rabbi asks, scarcely in a whisper. He turns

towards his companions, puzzled, shocked, wounded. "At a Jewish wedding . . . this? A carnival? Pheh!"

Mendel explains, wearily, "The younger generation is having its good time."

"This place is disgusting, as I live," Lou said to himself. Dancing couples swept by him, some laughing, some with serious faces as though they were dancing with their partners to fulfil a duty. Lou walked among the dancers, brushing angrily against them. On his way across the room he passed the rabbi and heard him exclaim, "Yankov, leave me alone. A carnival . . . and this a Jewish wedding? Let me go, hear me? I'm going home this instant." Lou sympathized with the rabbi. "This really beats a carnival," he said to himself. "And this is supposed to be a wedding." Pictures of dancing savages with painted faces crossed his vision; the beating of tomtoms filled his ears. "At least some savages were honest," he thought. "On the wedding night all the male guests enjoyed the bride before the husband went to her. At this place the male guests enjoy her in their minds, bah!" The music ceased with a long, weird sigh.

Mrs. Wichman beamed as she walked toward the chairs with her husband. "Oh, Morris, I had such a fine dance with Mr. Seldon. Mm-m, he's so light on his feet! Like a feather. I . . . I . . . oh, I'm so happy and so tired. I never enjoyed myself so much. Morris, I'm glad we came. Everything is so nice, so fine, so good, oh, Morris, Morris . . ."

Mr. Wichman's face oozed like a red sponge. "Ach, can't you leave me alone?" he panted at his wife who relieved herself of at least fifty pounds by holding on to his arm. "May a black year be my lot if I'll ever follow your advice again. Tell me, fool, tell me, what devil put it into your head to bring me over to Mrs. Pollicove—not only that, but to tell her that my only wish in life is to dance with her? Woe is me! After such a meal all I can do is stand on my legs, and yet my dear little wife—a dark year on her—picks out partners for me to dance with—not only that, but such a partner that not even the devil himself could drag her around the floor."

Panting, sweating couples walked to the sides of the ballroom, chattering and wiping their faces with soaking handkerchiefs. Where was the bride, the young wife Yetta? No one knew and no one cared. Some of Yetta's friends of a sudden realized that she and her husband had disappeared; with wide-open eyes they searched through the crowd of guests, then remarked, "Can you beat it, they've left without saying a word!" then smiled in a knowing way.

Mrs. Hoffman sat wearily in a chair among many guests. She was happy to be done with it all. It was still difficult for her to realize that her little Yetta was now a wife. It was difficult for her to think of anything now. Weeks of preparation for the wedding left her gasping for sleep. She smiled to her friends and repeated, "Don't mind me, enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself."

A storm of voices rose, high-pitched laughter and shouts. The question was, who thought of it first, or did everybody think of it at the same time? Mothers and fathers who had watched their sons and daughters dance and who had tried to jazz it up a little bit themselves, now took the bit into their own mouths, called to each other, dragged each other to the center of the ballroom, gradually formed a circle while calling, "A *kazatska,* a *kazatska.*" The musicians were ready for anything, so they began to play a lively Russian dance. The men and women in the circle joined hands, began to quiver from head to foot with impatience, strained at the circle until it began to turn slowly; gradually it increased its tempo and mothers screamed, fathers bellowed, "Hup, hup, hup," heels clicked, feet darted back and forth with jerks, until the circle became a rapidly revolving, drunken chain of shrieking delight. The young people forgot their own dancing and looked on with shining eyes and something of surprise to see their parents behaving so irresolutely.

An end to such frantic scampering must come some time. Before several minutes passed the speed broke a hand grip somewhere and the circle shot far out, striking against the people watching at one side of the room. Mrs. Kaminsky landed in Mrs. Hoffman's lap, and Mrs. Hoffman reassured her with, "Don't mind me, enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself."

"Good night, Mrs. Hoffman," said Mrs. Klein. "I enjoyed myself so much. I wish you and Mr. Hoffman all the happiness in the world."

"Why are you going so soon?" said Mrs. Hoffman, scarcely keeping her eyes open. "Stay a while longer. Enjoy yourself."

Outside of the hotel, Mr. and Mrs. Wichman are with difficulty getting into a taxi-cab. As they at last sink into the cushioned seat, a burst of frenzied jazz shoots out of the hotel windows, a syncopation agonizing the peace of the street. The music nevertheless sounds tired; it is crying for rest. One knows that the wedding will shortly end. But not Mrs. Wichman. Step by step, as the taxi carries them through the dark streets, she goes over the entire evening, enlarging on each detail, on each movement, on each person and each gesture, on each word, each dish, each gown, each face, on diamonds, on flowers, on waiters, on music, on each each and each each until Mr. Wichman desperately throws back his head, covers each cheek with the palm of each hand and lets out a long dismal groan. "Woe is me!" he cries miserably, "Woe is me! One would think you never attended a wedding before. One would think you were still a girl of sixteen. *Gottenu,* from eight o'clock, every minute, every second, without a stop, all I hear is 'A nice wedding, such a nice this, such a nice that, Morris, Morris, Morris,' . . . " Mr. Wichman sits up erectly in his seat and looks sharply at his wife. "Will I ever hear the end of it? *Nar!* The wedding is over. All right, it's over, forget about it. Tomorrow you'll have another wedding. Then next week another one and next year still another one. Tonight one wedding is over and tomorrow another one will begin. But for a few minutes, please, I beg you, forget your weddings . . ."

"Well, are you never getting out?" Mrs. Wichman exclaims.

Mr. Wichman's mouth is still open. He looks around and sees that the taxi is in front of his house. He pushes the door open, climbs out and walks several steps away. Then he stops, listens, and hearing nothing, turns around. Mrs. Wichman is still seated in the taxi, staring angrily at him. He shakes his head, goes back, lets out a despairing "Ah!" and helps his wife out of the car.

PEARL ANDELSON SHERRY

Intact

She thinks of yesterday and today and tomorrow as 'time undivided in eternity', but is grateful for the imaginary bars that separate one day from the next, giving to each morning emphasis of the first beat of a measure of music: *one,* two, three; *one,* two, three; *one,* two, three; and so on for the rest of a girl's natural life. She has awakened this morning with the thrush and, still lying on her cot, has seen the sun rise like a prima donna, very full and grand, and with sure feet tread across the boards. The thrush sang on with early morning vigor. The windows were open, of course, of the shack that was all windows, that is, wooden flaps propped up by sticks. And the air came in cool like sand under bare feet. Sleep in the city, she thought, where sleep is cheap. She thrust her instep from under the old blankets that they used there, and unlatched the back door, amused at having latched it at all, for fear perhaps that Orion might step down with his Sword clanking and his Dog at his heels and steal the lanterns hanging from the beams, she unlatched the door and in her nightgown climbed the dune at the rear of the shack to the outhouse, the cold sand flowing like seawater between her toes. She stood upon the crest of the dune as she had stood last night and watched the innumerably distinct stars, but now she looked at the heavy sun of morning and the last washing-out colors of sunrise.

Later her feet raise little winds of soft sand, dry sand just outside the door of the shack, and now they make steady prints on the wet sand of the margin. Hoop-la! In she goes! The spray rises to greet her face. Her mind is clear like a large empty room and the substance of the water and the substance of the air echo through it. The substance of the water is different from the substance of the air. It is coarser, crueller, electric to the blood and

nerves. She bathes, then swims out to the sand-bar. Only the head and the shoulders are visible as she sits on the sand-bar, flicking an imaginary tail. Her submerged childhood, O shadowy Undine, how she wept at Ouida! Now too she could weep at Ouida. She weeps for the forlorn ones in a book, at the cinematic tragedies she weeps, for Ethel Barrymore, but when her lover left her last year without a word or a note or an intimation even, did she weep? She bought herself a deeply philosophic work that she had been meaning for some time to read, and went often to the theatre, and heard all the music there was to hear. Her present man was a chemist, whom she had picked up at a concert. As casually as the other had left her without a word or a note or an intimation even, she had taken this one as casually on. He followed the example she had set, making a perfect pattern, amusing at all times, courteous with a courtesy that was as much a part of him as his bone. Both gave without obligation, demanding nothing. As the relationship had begun, so it had continued.

She sits on the sand-bar and Time, as it so often does with her, is receding. The immediate air is a pale diaphanous green, harmonizing with her dull red hair and white skin, flicked with green. Veiled in the you-might-say pale-green tulle of the air and swathed in the you-might-say pale-green taffeta of the water, for as she had decided the textures of the two are different, she confronts eternity. Her live and watery gown murmurs. And now she possessed vast lands under sea and in the air high above the earth but on the earth itself she had nothing. Contrariwise this did not make her sad. For really she lived on the affirmations that she plucked out of the air. And a carefree life it was. O very carefree! she thought wearily. And if I were to slip my body into the lake as one slips something into a pocket, I might wear my watered silk forever. But after all she was hungry, not yet having eaten that day. And so she swam back with a precise cutting motion of the arms and, wet as she was, sat down to breakfast.

Whenever she could spare the time, she came out here to the Indiana dunes. One could go nowhere else as easily and as cheaply

from Chicago. It was a very satisfactory place from Monday to Friday inclusive, but weekends were terrible with strewn Cracker-jack boxes and hot dogs and pop and the steel-mill hands from South Chicago yelling, "Hey, you, Joe!" "Jesus, you done it, Stanley!" and bonfires on Saturday night. They toasted their hot dogs and sang camp-fire songs and made a sort of love, the girls going just so far and no farther. She was not particularly fastidious or reverent herself, but she could not stand the smart aleck way they had out here; and so she never came weekends after the first few times, but whenever she could otherwise. Now it was late September, too late for even the weekday people, though the weather was gorgeous, and she had taken her vacation late purposely to be out here alone; and she was, you might say, alone. Though of course there were others, solitary like herself, wearing like herself PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB upon their backs. She might step outside the shack (and she stepped outside the shack), and see no one, actually not a soul. And she saw no one, not a soul, but the translucent water and the fine-meshed air. She went in and put on her enormous straw sombrero, for the sun meant her skin no good, and she locked the shack, smiling at herself for retaining her city habit of locking up before she went away. Who would rifle the bread-box? She took the Indian trail through the woods, intending a casual two-mile hike and back, and was absorbed instantly, no sooner did her nostrils take up again the thread of green and growing and her ears that vast cathedral silence amid the smell of ferns and fungi. She could not help but concentrate herself, vocative, into a point, an exclamation, and offer it as a prayer to God. Here I am! Here she was, to take her or leave her.

Split images, ambiguous memories, blurred her brain, layer on layer, unheeded; her hands pushed aside intrusive branches. She walked with her head high and thought she was not thinking. The gray eyes of the chemist fell into the ill-remembered face of that one before who had left her without a word, like parts of a picture-puzzle wrongly assorted, but she did not notice and went on walking with her head high. Her mother's sickly yet withal kindly face floated to the surface like a cork, and her mother's faith in God was like an ointment, very cooling and healing. Her father's lank

figure and his ill-advised ways,—certainly he had in a manner ruined her mother's life, and was to blame for the direction of hers, though why 'to blame?' was there so much to be ashamed of? Nothing to be ashamed of, nothing at all, with head high like a queen's, but as weariness sometimes overtakes one, yes, weariness. Time had passed, as in a cinema, but no dawn had come, though her courage over-rode her weariness, and in this spirit she had taken the chemist on, expecting nothing. A keen lean body and the right kind of a mind, dependably witty, and she hoped he would last over the winter, which was apt to be very dull otherwise in spite of music and so forth. She could always manage very happily in the summer; her own resources were somehow doubled. She had of course quarreled with the chemist once or twice, but that was to be expected, and she had found that men did not leave, nor did she leave them, either during or after a misunderstanding but at some time of great calm. At least that had been her experience. The woods on the way back fluctuated and dissolved their colors into their component parts, and as she walked along the narrow foot-path midway on the hillside fresh winds from the interior of the woods came like the message of an oasis. Here and there the young birches leaned obliquely and the willows spread themselves close to the ground in the shape of cauliflower. She passed a charred grove that made her think of black magic and a stretch of squat firs, very dark, glowering and malformed, that made her think of the same. The birds on the interior sang their little unfamiliar solo songs and altogether she was content. Though how could an old maid be happy? her mother wanted to know. Nevertheless, she could herself without any effort remember a time, when after her first disillusionment with men, it had seemed that in marriage only could she negotiate the return to security and peace of mind. Without this tether and the pull of children she had felt she would go mad, for what was there left to restrain 'the balloon of the mind' from floating away? She had won, however, though the protagonist had left its toothmarks on her soul, and of course the second fight had been nothing at all compared with it, and this last time she had consoled herself with a book. Nevertheless, she could without any effort remember the day when she had felt that she could

never hold her head up again until made honest by marriage like any servant-girl. Then, within herself, her eyes were always on the ground. But she had carried it off with great bravado, and if anyone suspected, as her mother perhaps did, that she was unhappy, no one, *that* she stood ready to vouch for, had any idea of the whole of it. But that was over, and she had done very well by herself. She was complete now like a leaf or a plum, a growing thing whose pattern was fulfilled, and she had no wish for any but the most temporary ties beyond the tie that kept the atoms of her body together and in their place. She had made her adjustment with life, knew what she could do and what she could not do, and it would be very annoying at this point to see to it all for another person. As, for instance, the chemist, who was eons behind her in this respect and still reached for the impossible. Feeling thus sure of herself, she stepped out of the woods as one steps from indoors out. Walking swiftly home along the sifted strip of beach, she thought, 'this afternoon I shall take myself walking again.'

Was it—of course, it was he, waiting on the door-stoop with his khaki knapsack over his shoulders, and as she went forward to meet him: why had he come today? she asked herself. She was thoroughly annoyed,—though smiling, her hand outstretched to greet him,—at the idea of his having intruded upon this day that she had kept for herself, but she granted at the same time at the back of her mind that had he chosen not to come tomorrow when she did expect him,—tomorrow was laid away for him like a gift, wrapped and ribboned, to be handed him when he came with 'this is yours',—she would have been entirely disconsolate. Obedient to the situation, with a final regret she tossed the remainder of the day into his lap, telling him it was nice of him.

He arose with that springy motion, that courtesy, which was as much a part of him as his bone, and said he couldn't wait another day. She said she didn't blame him, the weather had been magnificent. He admitted the weather had had something to do with it. She unlocked the door and felt that she was lending herself to him as one might lend a belonging which is returned at last with a thank you.

And at the end of the hour he was still talking and talking, while she sat on one of the sticks of furniture, somebody's discarded reed rocker, terribly out at the elbows. She listened quietly, looking out through the open windows, each window ruled into two equal parts by the stick that propped its flap open. In each of the two equal parts of each of the divided windows the sea and sky and beach and dune-berry bushes and the long colored dune-grasses formed a composition, so that it seemed as though some curious hand had been experimenting with arrangements of beach and sky and water and bushes and grasses, trying them first this way and then that, and placing them in the end side by side for a comparison of effects. For though no two of the compositions were alike, the style in all of them was the same.

JOSEPH MITCHELL

Cool Swamp and Field Woman

He was not where he wanted to be. This was not an old city, and there was no cleanliness. It was an inland city, far inland and it was a new city, but it was not clean. There was nothing for him to do but drink. He was a quiet drinker and he would lie still on the bed and become conscious of the room he was in. He would watch space decay and he would think of time dissolving like thick cigaret smoke when a breath is blown into it and through it. He would be still on the bed and think of the country and of the fields like strong horses and of his own people with their sweat smelling like dead flowers, and he would go frantic in the quiet room holding to thoughts of his own people who smelled of dead flowers.

Stumbling almost but erect he would go through a door and sit down at a table and wait for what would happen surely. She came to him and said, "Homesick dearie?" and he would reply, "Yes, dearie," and she would make a slow laugh in her mouth and say, "We'll go upstairs." And always he found himself as he had been ever since he had known himself, always not liking to be where he was, always wanting to be away somewhere by himself, by the sea! always wanting to go away and never knowing the reason why. He whispered in the cold winds, "Would to find a wine as wild as the boar is wild in the swamp deep in winter."

On a day he left his bed, shaved and washed himself clean. He sat by a window, smoking cigarets. He thought of boys going swimming in the summer. How they rubbed mud on their bodies until they were showy in the sun like black men. Then they would dive into the water and come up so white they became proud of their clean bodies.

He wanted whiskey because it was a mirror. He wanted whiskey in him to make his legs tired, to hold him still. But he sat by the

window quietly, smoking his cigarets. On a day he became sick and he was desperate and he said I will go away. He left and went to the swamps, to the country he had gone away from. And now the farm belonged to him because his father was dead. He gazed at the fields fallow in the dark as he walked up the lane to the house and thought of them as his mother. I will love the earth, he thought, it is my sweetheart.

He went into the fields and plowed the dark earth and in the rows he planted tobacco, and he cooked his own meals and ate them alone. He had for his plow animal a mule he had bought from a horse-trader, and he would go to the barn when he had finished his supper and sit smoking, listening to the mule inside the stall cracking the corn. He would watch the mule and not be satisfied with it. He thought of animals as he thought of the earth. What he wanted was a mighty horse. He would stay at the barn until he was near asleep, thinking, listening to the warm sounds in the swamp. He was so quiet sitting in the dark that the mule often was not aware of his presence and started when he arose to go to bed.

Inside the rooms there was no peace. The man was alone. In the fields plowing he was almost at rest sometimes. After he had turned up the earth in a field he would look back over it and walk into it with bare feet and run up rows and sometimes he almost cried with pleasure at the smell of the field. He was as much in love with the earth as he had ever been with a woman.

But in the nights he longed for a woman who could come and go like the fields. He wanted a woman who would look out over the ripe earth and be afraid as a child looking first at the sea. I am become an animal and I want another quiet animal to come and be near. He thought of a woman alone in a field, a field woman.

There was a brown woman who lived across the swamp. He walked into a field in which she was working on an afternoon near night when the warmth of the sun was leaving the earth, and he watched her as she moved, watched her feet become intimate with the earth. He had come to the field to ask the farmer to swap a

day's work with him. He said, "Who is that woman?" The farmer smiled.

She was a woman with clean strength like a colt and she had to find somewhere something to make her weak with life. At night she would go off with men. She would ride in an automobile with men and she needed the speed of the wheels flying fast to excite her. She was exultant as a tree in the wind when she caught the motion of the engine urging the automobile on and on. Men wondered. She laughed in their faces and threw her head up and did not mind when they came close and held and kissed her. She made it nice for them because they were giving her swiftness and a feeling going through her body that had nothing to do with what they wanted and what she gave. She felt brave as a tree growing tall and as timid. They swiftly passed farm houses with everyone in them asleep. She thought of the people inside sleeping peacefully or maybe someone inside couldn't go to sleep and heard the automobile passing by. What did they think? Deep in the night. An automobile passing by.

And so he could not be at peace in the fields. The plants were ripening and he could not be still. He ran to the swamp and looked into the water. Swamps are passionate and they drive men mad. Vines grow into the branches of trees and crawl over the mud. Cypress roots are pushed up through the mud and they are shrivelled and polished like the knees of a sleeping crone. There are sweetgum, blue gum and tulip trees. There is a bush which blooms in the rain under the branch-maple. It has violet flowers, poisonous as snake's spittle. The vines crawl over the trees like fishing worms in a can. Sometimes almost as large as their support the vines hug tall trunks and climb to the top to mate their blossoms with those of the tree. The ivy vines coiled around a smooth maple are like the snakes around the man in a statue. It is a way to sense the swamp: the slim ambitious vines. In places the streams have sand bottoms and the water has a wicked color like a medicine as it floats over the sand. The sun's rays slip through the treetops and shoot colors into the water, colors and sickly shadows. Where the light plays with the water thin angry pickerel sun themselves. The

swamp moves slowly with slow swelling life and it smoulders in secrets like the sewers of an old city.

He could not keep away from the swamp and he knew it as a madness. To him it was like a great voluptuous she-animal, it was like an old woman with child. The cypresses had trunks like bottles, like ten-pins, as if they were pregnant. That was the way he thought in the swamp. Old life decaying slowly before the young could live. The swamp was more than mud and vines and moss. It was primitive and barbaric. It was like strong men stretched out on floors, drunk. When negroes went into it their faces became still and their eyes began searching. They were uneasy with the shadows because of the warmth in the coolness of the mud and because of the long snakes coiled and crawling under the mud and through it.

He said, "Mud is the great mother. The Bible speaks of dust but life sprung from the mud." Back in the huddle of centuries something had happened in the mud. In the blue swirl of the Euphrates or the Nile the thin chemicals bumped into each other and twitched in the blackest of all muds.

He was in the swamp and it began to rain. He came out and walked to his neighbor's field to have a word with the woman. A wind was blowing the slight rain about. A nigger was plowing a field which looked as if it had been fallow for seasons. The plow cut through the flat grey earth like a long knife through a watermelon, breaking the land so seeds could be thrown in and covered up. The earth would fall in love with the seeds. The seeds would be like eggs under a hen. Fields had different smells. A red-clay tobacco field smelled different than the swamp bottoms where corn was planted. The fields were like women with their smells. It was nice with the wind blowing and why was the nigger plowing in the rain? He asked the man a question. "No," he said, "she has gone to town."

He went back to his own plants and to the barn and fed the mule. With a hoe in his hand he went up and down the rows cutting away the grass. He thought, she is not a mulatto woman: she is a field woman. Before he had cleaned a dozen rows the sun went out of sight and he was hungry. He cooked supper but the brace

of eggs, the grits and gnarled strips of bacon did not look good. It was not what he wanted at all. He left the table and walked to the well and got a watermelon he had brought from the corn field early in the morning. It was in a bucket deep in the well and cool. He took it in his arms and felt its coolness. He laid it on the grass and it made a cracking sound as his knife moved through it. He did not cut it into rashers but ate the heart as it came from the middle of the melon in one piece, firm and dripping. It satisfied him.

He lit a cigaret and sat quietly beside the well. A magnolia tree grew near. The odor from its great ivory blossoms hung in the air like a laboratory smell. It made him think of crouched leopards, of large women walking about alone under the stars. He got up and walked to the swamp and in it because the nights were getting warm and it was midsummer. The time poplar leaves yellow and spin to the earth and the rains begin.

Soon he began to cure the tobacco. The tobacco leaves hung above the clay furnaces and withered until they were yellow and the smell floated and the dry sand dropped from the folds in the leaves. The woman sat with him on the white sand near the furnace and her smell was as intoxicating as leaf smell and when she left him she did not say goodbye. She went her way with the lowest of songs. And he walked in the woods and broke limbs from trees and tasted them and he pulled green needles from the end of pine shoots and rubbed them and the smell was keen on his hands and on his face. He rejoiced in the tastes and what he saw and heard and the odors of the warm night.

The women thought of him as a man who went hunting alone. She thought of him as going to places where no one had ever been before, in the swamp. No one knew where he would go. Into the swamp, deep somewhere, she knew, where the mother squirrels were, along the mother stream. Her thoughts were silent and they went with the wind. Once riding in night she thought, Where am I going and what is there.

He was strong and waiting for her when the warmest nights came. He went to feed the mule and he stood silent a long while drawing in to himself the throbbing of life in the barn. The smell in old corn cribs is a madness before the day's death. It was in his

nostrils when he gave corn to the mule. It was going away, the smell. It would come again tomorrow with the sun. Now it is gone away. It has gone where the rats go, deep into the corn pile where the dry brown coverings rustle like a scorpion's rustle through the chinquapin leaves.

She was on the porch in a chair, waiting. The night was as warm and dark as the water in a warm pool. She held out her hands and said she was tired. She said, "I have been working. See how dirty my hands are." She had been working in his fields and she was a tired woman. She clung to him like the warm night and would not let him away. They sat on the porch quietly and the night was the warmest of all the nights. Sand was warm and rooms were warm. He was quiet, thinking of dead nations, of forgotten faces. He was silently slowly growing angry with the woman.

He moved away from her, pushed her hands away and her face and stood off the porch. "No," he said, "I don't love you. What I tell you is, God damn you." He went into the house and got his gun out of a closet. She thought, where is he going, and crouched away. He went up the lane into the field cooling himself, letting the warmth of the woman leave him. He had the gun with him because of what she would think when he shot it. He pulled the trigger cautiously and the bullet blistered the corn leaves. Soon he went back to the house and heard her inside crying aloud on the bed. He went into the room and she ran away from him into the kitchen, scared of him and it made him uneasy. He touched her shoulders and whispered but she would not look. He shook her and threw her to the floor and she held to him crying, saying his name.

He took her up in his arms and carried her into the bedroom. He put her softly into the bed's embrace. He said, "Now you be quiet and go to sleep," and she held tightly his hand.

He left the house swiftly. He walked where it was cool, in the sand road: still warm he walked through the corn, waving drowsily, into the cool swamp. He breathed the night smells, the bay blossoms, the softness of the flowers of the tulip tree, the cool ditches, and the wild hibiscus like a scarlet wound, like a cotton flower in the rain. He felt cool and clean as a runner throwing his body into a slant to go round a curve. He said her name and looked

into the water. Now he thought of the warmest night and of what a crazy son of a hedgerow he was. He thought of her asleep like a child, like a sweet child, and he felt how nice she was and how sweet she was and how she looked going to sleep trusting him almost with tears in her eyes and he had tears in his eyes in the cool swamp thinking of her.

GERALD SYKES

Geld Your Enemy!

I HAD just seen a movie. It was about nine o'clock one night in late spring on Fifth Avenue. I walked slowly, thinking, not seeing the cracks or the curbs or the crossings. Some venom had touched my heart that I hoped would return; but no extreme of attention or device of memory could retrieve it, and I was panting from effort as I turned down Adriana's street. Have you noticed how often our very best inspiration can be traced to an unworthy source? I had just witnessed a trite reconciliation of parents and union of lovers, accompanied by phrases from popular symphonies; yet through these inglorious stimulations I was almost exalted. I was on the point of hatching the most deadly trick ever permitted to nest in a human soul.—I turned into Adriana's.

Augustin Yourstruly let himself out of the automatic elevator at the fifth floor, closing the door behind him carefully in preparation for its next passage. The nearest apartment was open; he walked in and found Adriana in pajamas cutting her toenails. He closed the door.

"Oh it's you," she said with surprise. "I thought you were going to stay home tonight."

"If I am not expected," he declared narrowly, "so much the better."

"Oh no! so much the worse! so much the worse for you!" She contradicted him explicitly.

"I see." He smiled.

"Don't say that! You're already thinking of some way to find out what I meant. You're jealous already. Then don't smile that way! You'll feel worse when you do find out. You shouldn't try to be so tough if you've got such a soft heart."

"On the contrary," he replied, rallying, "a soft heart is the first requirement. In my vocation the most successful, that is those who

ultimately become the most muscular in spirit, were the tenderest in the beginning. We grow our muscles where our injuries were. I welcome my sufferings. I would have been greatly indebted to you it I had come in tonight and found your knees not this way but that."

"Get away from me!"

"If you only knew how such a voice terrifies me. . . . Maybe if I had come in half an hour earlier or half an hour later I would have found them that way."

"Oh don't try that any more! I'm not going to tell you anything. Maybe I've got an ape in the closet. He's swinging behind you on the door! He's got a coathanger in his paw! Look out!" she shrieked.

Augustin, who never followed another's eye even while a harmless comparison was being demonstrated, did not turn round, though it seemed to him as if lightning were striking on all sides. He stood firm a moment, and then smiled again.

"Oh wipe that smile off!" she said. "I'm getting sick of you. What is this vocation of yours? I shouldn't get angry, I know—I'm too much older than you for that—yet I can't help it. All I can find you're fitted for is simply nastiness. You walk into a room and no one notices you. So you sit there like a child until you think up some prank. Then you turn it over in your mind until it is perfect and ready. Pretty soon some girl's insides rumble across the room. Or somebody's grandmother refers to a statesman by 'a short genitory word,' simply incredible, and goes on as if nothing had happened. Or a minister can't keep from nuggling himself. Or a gentleman tears from the room because he imagines his pants are open. At first it's funny. Then it's interesting to find out how you did it—how you put the letters of the word one by one into the old lady's mouth, and so forth. Later it's still more interesting to figure out what it is inside you that makes you do these things. . . ." Her voice diminished on the last words. She compared the alignment of the toes on either foot.

"Well, go on," he said.

"Well," she flared up angrily: "in the end what happens? We lose all respect for you. Why, when I met you for the first time I thought you had the real heroic quality, even though you are so

small. You were sort of the protagonist of the whole room. Now you've got a minor part, you're just an eccentric now."

Her knives and scissors and files were gathered together. She pushed herself up on the heel of her hand.

Between ourselves, when she got up I thought she was going to throw me out. I felt an impulse to hug one of her legs—at times they seem enormous to me—and refuse to let go.

Her knee when it is spread
Is wider than my head.

When she stood up her breasts looked like melons. They made me think of one of her confessions: that after running away from home to become a dancer she got stranded in Kansas City and took a job, not in a store or in an office, but as a servant girl. Her figure is plebeian in the way that early royalty was plebeian; it is common and crude and distinguished.

"What you have been saying reminds me of the first night I slept with you," Augustin remarked slowly.

"No, it doesn't remind you of that at all. That's simply your nastiness again."

"I admit, of course," he continued in his previous voice, as though she had not spoken, "that I was at such an advantage that it's really nothing to boast about. You were a famous woman for your body, the best example of a Rubens figure—well, nearly Rubens, not so fat and a little grander—on the stage today. I was five feet five and weighed a hundred and eighteen pounds. My body was so inferior to yours that it took me less than threequarters of an hour to implant in your mind a permanent, fixed attraction towards me alone. The première danseuse towards a little shrimp that worked in an office."

There was a scratch at the keyhole that made Augustin aware of the fearful presentiment with which he had heard the elevator halt five seconds earlier. The door was unlocked, and a tall and handsome black-browed man, about thirtyfive years old, carrying a bundle, came in. Adriana was already there at the door to take the bundle.

"Here's your key," the man said. "I let Robert off and drove back myself."

"Put the key down," she said. Augustin watched the back of her hands touch the man's sleeve as she took the bundle, which clanked with bottles. "I'll put the liquor in the kitchen. There's enough here to stew a ballet. This is Mr Yourstruly, Mr Flattery."

"Why, how do you do!" Augustin said with gaiety, coming forward out of the dark corner in which he had been sitting.

The other took his hand in silence, as though surprised or puzzled. Then a smile intimating the most fashionable acquaintance appeared on his face. Adriana left the room with the package. Augustin turned away at once from the other man and took down a book from a shelf which he began to read immediately at the page where it opened. His back was carefully turned toward the newcomer; he took a large barlow knife from his pocket and slit a page.

Adriana returned. "Now put up the book! Don't be rude!" she commanded irritably to Augustin. "And put away your knife!—I suppose you're wondering how this little shrimp got in while you were gone, Roger," she said to the newcomer.

"No, Roger is wondering why you took the trouble to introduce him to his little shrimp of a first cousin," Augustin said.

"I can't do anything about it. That's his way of making a joke. He thinks it's very funny," she explained to Roger. "If you'd rather be alone with me, I'll tell him to leave now."

"You see, she simply can't believe it," Augustin in his turn explained to the newcomer. "It is absolutely inconceivable to her after all only logical mind that some one so abominable and nasty and poor as I should be related to some one so distinguished and splendid and wealthy as Roger Flattery."

"I'm willing to admit it's inconceivable," she said to Roger with a laugh.

"Yes, it's true," Roger replied in a bass voice, as though she had questioned him. "I'm Augustin's cousin. I'm his godfather too."

I hadn't seen him in over two years. During that time my memory had not once summoned him up; yet this, I found, was the guy I had hated every day, the object of all my preparation. This

is the cousin who sent the check that I sent back. This is the international polo player. This is the one I used to watch through my fingertips, waiting for him to make some slip, if only in grammar, that I could seize upon. He is a powerful vibrant man despite the reserve natural to a famous athlete. When he spoke for the first time in his familiar deep voice I remember that my eyes closed a moment and I nodded with admiration. I was aware almost at once that a rapport was being established between the two of them, which meant that it must have been very near their first meeting. It was what passes between superior people when they are recognizing each other's patents of nobility, and it passed exclusively between them, as though I were not in the room.

"So he's your cousin! Why didn't you tell me in the first place!" Adriana exclaimed to Roger. "Why did you let him take me in?"

"I didn't know what was going on. I thought it was some joke that I was not supposed to spoil."

"It was! It was just like one of Augustin's jokes. He had it all figured out, he knew you would think that. It was just like him to pick up the book and turn around. You can be sure that when he is making a joke he will carry out every detail.—Well, sit down, anyway," she said to Roger. "You look worn out—like a Roman general after a forced march."

"I've been riding all day," he admitted—"not after Gauls but a wooden ball."

"You're the closest approach I know of to a Roman general," she insisted.

"What she wishes to convey—to me, not to you—is the impression she just suddenly received that a man who commands the workers in a factory today, and is besides a member of our equestrian class, is the modern equivalent of the patrician who commanded the soldiers in a legion under the Republic," Augustin said to Roger. "She probably was reading Cæsar last week in translation. She is educating herself, you know."

"Oh, do you think so?" Roger asked.

This remark angered Augustin. "I'll tell you a story. It will pay you to listen," he said sharply to Adriana. "When I was about thirteen this cousin Roger of mine—I suppose he must have been

about twentyfive then—thought I might like to see New York at Christmas-time, so he invited me to come and spend the holidays with him. He sent me a check for five hundred dollars, although I only needed about a third as much, so we used the rest to pay the landlord and the grocer. Roger had a house on the West Side then. I remember reading one afternoon and noticing that it was growing dark. Not five seconds later a man came in and turned on the lights and pulled down the shades. Well, it didn't take me long to find out that I detested Roger. It will doubtless seem plausible enough to you that a sensitive child should have found him nauseous. But there was another reason for hating him. He was my rival."

"Your rival!" Adriana said.

"There was a maid in the house. I observed her the moment I arrived. The next thing I discovered she was in love with him. She didn't even notice me. It seemed insufferable, I was going to be there nearly two weeks. I don't believe he encouraged her in any way, or even knew the first thing about it. In fact, it never would have occurred to me to connect Roger with anything sexual if he hadn't walked in the door five minutes ago. I suppose that what I considered then my jealousy was in reality only envy—I envied his height, his money, his goodness, and his innocence. But either way, I hated him."

"Simply because she liked him so much that she didn't notice his thirteen-year-old cousin?"

"Oh, she noticed me before the two weeks were up. In fact, everything turned out all right in the end."

"What do you mean? How did that happen?"

"It was simply a matter of putting the idea in her head that it would be nice to unbutton a little boy. After that all I had to do was wait in my room until she could think up some pretext for coming in."

"And I suppose you finally put the pretext in her head also," Adriana commented. She turned to Roger. "Is a word of it true?" she asked.

"It's true that I didn't notice anything," Roger said. "But that doesn't mean that it didn't take place. As I think of it now, I can

see how it might all very well be true. But you know I don't see one-tenth of what Augustin does. I was aware of that even when he was a boy. He notices everything. He really has very rare talents."

"Go on, tell me some more about him. What do you think of your godson?" she asked. "I've been trying to figure him out."

"The truth is that I don't know him very well, though I've often thought that I'd like to. The last time I saw him must have been almost two years ago. He had just arrived in New York, and his mother had told him to go to my office and get some letters of recommendation. I understand he tore up the letters afterwards and found a job himself through the newspapers."

During this discussion of himself Augustin was thinking how proudly Adriana would hold Roger's head in her arms when he was tired.

A woman clad in pajamas entered the room. She was sharp and bright and meretricious looking.

Augustin hailed her with delight. "Ah! the Black-budded! So you've been here all the time! You were going to spend the night with Adriana!"

Adriana directed a sharp glance at his uncovered suspicions.

"I can't be anywhere five seconds that that person doesn't reveal the fact that he was my original seducer," the newcomer said to Roger only. She had walked straight to him as though not noticing the others, and sat down touching him. "When did he get in anyway? I simply can't stand the little pervert."

"You have no idea how glad I was to see you!" Augustin said.

She ignored him. "Now that this person has boasted so loudly that he was my original seducer, I suppose I can't expect to keep any secrets from you," she said to Roger.

"Why, Augustin didn't say anything about that, Rho," Adriana protested.

"Now that all the peculiarities of my body have been disclosed, I suppose I might as well undress in the middle of the floor," Rho continued to Roger. "I can't be anywhere five seconds that that little pest doesn't strip me bare. He is not content with letting it be known that he has seen my body naked, he has to describe the individual parts."

"Why, Augustin didn't say anything about your body, Rho," said Adriana.

"Oh yes, he did! I heard him! You heard him too, didn't you, Roger? But you think I talk too much, don't you, Adriana? All right, I won't talk any more."

"That's a good idea," said Adriana.

"How are you, darling?" Rho turned to Roger and put her arms round his neck and stuck her tongue in his ear. "How have you been all week?"

"You met him an hour ago," Adriana reminded her.

"I know what let's do!" Rho exclaimed. She turned to Adriana. "Let's keep Roger here tonight. Let the best woman win."

"In the meantime," Augustin said, "what about me?"

"I'll decide about you later. I may be sending you home pretty soon," said Adriana.

"Let him stay," Rho suggested. "He can be referee."

A bottle of Roger's whisky was opened. They agreed to go to another apartment on the same floor where a party was being held to which Adriana had been invited in the afternoon. She did not know her inviter, an Italian with a title, except through three rides together in the elevator. Augustin thought she had been immodest to ride alone in such a small car with a Latin of noble blood; she should have insisted upon having the car to herself, or permitted him to go first without her. Adriana and Rho put on dresses. The four walked down the hall toward the other apartment.

Shortly after arriving at the party Augustin withdrew from Adriana and Roger in spite of Roger's detaining inquiry and the evident satisfaction that his departure gave Rho across the room in an elderly gentleman's embrace. Then Augustin roamed the party in leopardly discontent. Any of the bare-armed women of such easy access whom now he felt obliged to forego would have greatly exceeded his hopes on a hungry street prowl. He made a highball and drank it walking. Distance gave him a full-length view of Roger, as though he had been too close before to observe more than his head. Now he was able to appreciate his powerful body and his powerful masculine triumphs. For the first time, though it

seemed more than likely that Roger himself did not, Augustin really understood the significance of Roger's presence at Adriana's side. Also he appreciated for the first time Roger's position in the world as a celebrity and his uncommon gifts as an individual man. He made this rather complex perception while watching Roger in conversation with a young man who had been pointed out as the only son of a well-known millionaire, who addressed Roger with the greatest respect, and seemed as though enveloped in Roger's magnificence.—To the young man, Augustin reflected, it was conceivable that he might present himself some day for a position as secretary, and would be quizzed and eyed and judged, though both were about the same age and at the moment guests at the same party. This led him to recall a question that he had been asking himself since childhood: what his social position would have been in an earlier time, in an aristocracy? and made him abruptly understand that ranking is no less plain and arbitrary in a democracy, that his own position was low, and that he would never attain one equal in modern terms to the peerage to which his mind, from infancy, had believed he was born the heir.

He felt an arm round his shoulder. "I've seen you before! Either at Belmont or out at the Republican convention," an over-dressed man declared. It was the vice president and general manager of the corporation that employed Augustin as a clerk in its auditing department, who had probably remembered his face from one of the tours of inspection that he made quarterly with his suite.

Augustin repudiated any possible connection with emphasis. "I've never seen you before," he said coldly.

"Do you know how I can always tell the true conservative swells?" the other demanded, his hug warming. "They're always always either snooty or sloppy!" He roared with laughter.

"That doesn't interest me in the least," Augustin replied.

"Come on, let's go get a drink," the vice president said. "I've taken a liking to you," He forcibly conducted Augustin to a sideboard offering a barroom selection of liquors.

An Englishman was talking. "When this schedule of amalgamation, monopoly, and reciprocity is realized it will be possible to adjust production as exactly as a clock. In the American Empire

discipline will have no chance to relax, only to tighten, like certain knots, and so we shall avoid the fate of other empires. In time every man will acknowledge the Empire's supremacy, and the few masters will be mutually dependent. I don't see how the American Empire will ever end. Industrialism will remodel everything. Even the language will be put on a sound commercial basis. Before I die I myself will master your improved, superior terminology, perhaps even the accent." He strolled away with his companion.

"Now, I'll tell you what I want," the vice president confided to Augustin. "I'll certainly appreciate the favor. I want to meet this polo player Roger Flattery."

Augustin finished his third highball. "I know not the man," he denied.

"Aa aa aaa! I saw you come in with him!—I'll certainly appreciate the favor."

"I know not the man," denied Augustin for the second time.

They were interrupted by the appearance of the Italian. "I've been trying to return to you since the moment we were introduced," he said to Augustin breathlessly. "It was the first time I ever made that confession in my entire life. It was the most extraordinary incident that ever occurred to me. How did you make me do it?"

"I'll tell you more later," Augustin promised.

"He is the most remarkable young man I ever met!" the Italian exclaimed to the vice president. "We were introduced for the first time a little while ago, and within five minutes he had led me to confess something—a family secret—that I had never confessed before in my entire life."

The vice president again put his arm round Augustin. "Sure. I thought he was intelligent, prince. You might say I picked him out for his intelligence."

"In America intelligence is no longer a quality of mind, it is a social class," Augustin observed. "It recently outstripped the middle class."

"I do not know about such things," the prince responded. "Why should I conceal it now? I confessed it to every one ten minutes ago. My mother shot herself. She committed suicide. I never told any one before in my life. Only two other people knew, a priest

and my father. They are both dead. Five minutes after you arrived you made me tell every one."

The vice president removed his arm from Augustin's shoulder and regarded him with a look that was not wholly approving. He was a positivist; Augustin's feat had pleased him until it appeared to have benefited by supernatural encouragement.

"Did he ever see you before?" he asked the prince.

"No, we were just introduced."

"Maybe somebody told him."

"What's that? No; nobody knew but two people, and they both had died before he was born."

The vice president looked at Augustin again; he started to speak, then he left without saying a word.

Augustin smiled and turned to the Italian. "As a matter of fact, it can all be explained step by step," he began.

Rho ran up and interrupted him. "Have you seen Adriana?" she inquired.

"No," he said.

She drew him aside. "I know where Adriana is," she said. "She is in a bedroom with Roger. Do you want me to show you?" She led him to a white door and left him while his eyes were marking it. He returned to the dining room. Later he slipped back and looked at the door again, then he returned to the dining room. Several minutes later it occurred to him that he might pretend to have mistaken the bedroom door for the bathroom door, which was only a few feet away, in the event that he intruded upon any one. He went to the bedroom door and stood looking at its silver knob nearly a minute. At last he approached to turn it and enter.

"Oh don't do that!" Rho cried, appearing suddenly. "Don't spy on them, that wouldn't be fair!"

He returned to the dining room. A few minutes later he made sure of eluding her attention and walked to the real door of the bathroom and locked it after him.

He did not come out for half an hour. When he did he was seen by the Italian.

"What has happened? Are you unwell? Is there anything I can do for you? You look very unfortunate. If you are looking for

your friends, they all went for a drive. They are coming back later, they said."

Augustin went to a window.

Was it a disloyalty to my sorrow, or merely its natural effect, as I looked out at the ascending pillars and revolving towers of our night-city and read the time in numerals, that my heart should be eloquent? The moon was obscured two-fifths by the water-tower of an apartment house. To the west the surfaces of an office building whitened on many planes when a sign opposite flashed. At night I could not look at the city I hate without enjoyment and pride and admiration. Tomorrow I'll be in a better mood, it won't be so hard to hate it then. At the apartment house the door will be opening for a sales director. 20,000 servile, unwilling, enthusiastic workers will people the office building. The pillars and towers will be quiet and hideous. The skinny arms of indirect lighting will show. Roger will not care to sleep late; he will get up and climb into his brougham and go to work. The day will be spent in exhilaration and profit, in protesting against the deference with which he is treated, in still further assurances of his generosity and good will.—It is a city of usurpers. It is for the rapacious and the halfway. It is for Roger and Adriana. But both of them are less rapacious and less halfway than I am. But it is their city, not mine; it is for them, not me; they can beat it, I can't.

Augustin waited a long time. The party lost some of its members and gained others, but he walked away from all introductions. He most bitterly jeered to himself the women to whom he had at first been most inclined. He was unable to move toward any of them, or to sit down patiently, or to go home, or to read, or to drink any more. At length he became conscious that he was pacing the floor; he had already taken ten turns on a path that his feet without the knowledge of his head had established through three rooms; and his hand was clutching behind a dyed quill that it had picked up from a writing table, so that at the vent in his coat he seemed to be sprouting a green feather tail. His unvarying march, his inaudible soliloquizing, and this ornament were generally admired for their absurdity. A young woman who had been lying on the floor in imitation of a Japanese vaudeville act, juggling a

portable typewriter with her bare feet, considered Augustin's performance an act of rivalry. But as he paid attention to no one and kept up his march for an hour he was soon either forgotten or regarded as a nuisance. Finally, upon an impulse to leave at once, he halted sharp. He was striding to the door just as Roger and Adriana and Rho came in, together with the millionaire's son, their hair tufted by wind. Augustin was glad to find that he could despise the young man for the satisfaction that it obviously gave him to be in Adriana's company.

Roger hastened up to him. "Where were you?" he asked. "I looked everywhere for you, but Adriana was in a hurry to go."

Augustin checked his answer; he had been on the point of showing surprise that one of Roger's importance should take so much trouble on his account.

"Rho said you had gone home angry, didn't you, Rho?" said Adriana.

Rho was walking away: perhaps she had not heard.

"Anyway," Adriana said, "I knew that Roger only tried to find you because that was his idea of the proper thing to do. I knew he really didn't want you along."

Roger carefully considered her statement. "No; I don't think that's true, Adriana. As a matter of fact, I wanted Augustin to come. I like to talk to him. Let's sit down now," he suggested to Augustin.

"Remember," Augustin warned him, "when you sit down with me you are next to something monstrous and venomous. I will not follow the argument of your thought but its processes. Instead of hearing your 'message' I will be listening for the peculiar affinities of the mind that composes it. If everything goes well, you ought to give me a good working clew to yourself in about half an hour, though it may take longer if you are on your guard and it may not happen at all. Then it will require further time to find out what can be done with the clew. Maybe it will be possible to find something very interesting for you to do, maybe nothing at all. I warn you that I will do anything that occurs to me, no matter how dangerous to you."

"What about me?" Adriana asked Augustin. "Will you let me

stay and listen?" It was the first time in the evening that she had addressed him in a friendly tone. The question was merely gracious; she naturally expected to stay.

"No," Augustin said with cold resentment, "I won't allow it."

Since her return she had been watching him steadily; she had looked at Roger only once, and then as though he had bored her during the ride. There had returned to her eyes the bright interest that Augustin was accustomed to find when she was looking at him. "I won't interfere," she said.

"That doesn't matter, I won't allow it," he repeated coldly.

Rho divined Adriana's discontent from across the room and drew her away from the millionaire's son to a place alone in a corner. Being conscious of her friend's superiority she was cunning and waited for Adriana to mention Augustin first, which she did very soon, and then, instead of attacking him as usual, Rho confessed that she felt obliged to admire his knack of keeping dominant over almost any situation. Adriana replied that in order to do that he was capable of anything. Rho disregarded Adriana's noticeable failure to censure this part of his character. At the first word that could be construed as a criticism of her enemy she attacked him eagerly, dropping all cunning at once. She offered to demonstrate to Adriana the profound truth of what she had said by revealing for the first time an incident that had occurred to herself, which was the real origin of her hatred for Augustin. Although it would probably have been easy at that moment to extort from Adriana a request to go on, Rho neglected to do this and proceeded without even a pause; but Adriana did not understand for a long time what the incident consisted of, because it was preceded by so many explanations and so much wonder that it had ever taken place. Rho admitted that at the time what he had done was enjoyable; later, however, it was painful in the extreme. But what she had disliked even more than the pain was the cold disregard for her which must have led him to have the idea. At last in one brief sentence she allowed it to become clear that he had rubbed her with steelwool. Then she confined herself to an account of the two following days that she was obliged to spend in bed and the difficulty that she ex-

perienced in concealing the truth from her mother; and concluded with humorous sequels. Adriana did not question or interrupt her once; when the recital was ended she expressed her sympathy over the pain but resisted Rho's efforts to revert to a discussion of its author. Rho was disappointed over this, but she was even more keenly disappointed on another account, for she had seen Adriana smile momentarily at that point in the confession when the incident itself was touched upon.

She was going to remark that a new, unfamiliar coldness had been noticed by several of her friends in Adriana's dancing during the last season; but the latter stood up. In the next room was a circle of people; every one seemed to be gathered together. Both women hurried in.

Augustin was seated at a card table, before him a pad of paper. "Now the procedure is this," he said to the Italian. "You write down a question. Then you show it to me, and I write down my answer. Before you begin, however, Mr Flattery goes into the next room, with some one there to talk to him, so that he can't hear anything, or receive signals from me, and so forth. When your question and my answer have been written down he comes back again; the question is then asked him; he answers it; and we find that there is an amazing similarity between his answer and mine. Therefore it's up to you to think of a question that we couldn't possibly have agreed upon beforehand. But I will tell you now that there is no trick connected with this."

"All right," said the Italian, "I believe I have thought of the question already."

Roger started towards a bedroom. A question arose as to who should accompany him, and the vice president willingly volunteered, if some one would be kind enough to introduce him to Mr Flattery first. When the two men were gone the Italian sat down at the table, wearing a great smile, and wrote his question. He handed it to Augustin: Augustin read it, then looked at him carefully. "So that's what you've been thinking about," he said. Then he read the question aloud to the others:

> *"Of what importance has the bathroom been to the recent drama?"*

This amused most of the guests by its difficulty of anticipation. Adriana was struck by the special interpretation of it which Augustin and the Italian appeared to share. Augustin sat a while, frowning, then wrote his answer. The Italian read it aloud:

"The bathroom is the place for whatever cannot be shown on the stage, such as excrement, vomit, or tears."

Roger was led back blindfolded to be put the question.

"Just a minute," Adriana said. "I think it would be a good idea to make Augustin go into the next room while Roger's being asked. Let's see if it works that way."

"It won't make any difference," Augustin assured her, "whether I'm here or there."

Everybody clamored at once that he should go into the bedroom. He went. When the others felt certain that he was behind a locked door the question was read to Roger. He waited a few seconds, then answered slowly:

"The bathroom is the place for anything that can't be shown on the stage, like excrement, vomit, or tears."

Augustin was hailed from the bedroom in triumph. He came out fingering the blade of his barlow, with which he had begun to clean his nails while waiting. It was nearly as long as his hand and it weighed almost a half-pound. He looked at Adriana first.

"So this is your latest," she said.

He smiled.

"Put that knife away. I know exactly how it was done," she said. "It was simply a matter of getting Roger in a state of mind where he wanted to do whatever you wanted him to do, where he desired the sensation that that gives. It's easy. As soon as the other person wants to do what you want him to do, whatever it is, then he rolls over—he knows at once, he is able to guess, even if you don't tell him, exactly what it is that you want."

"Listen to her discovery," Roger declared in an oratorical voice, "and you will hear her confession."

This remark attracted universal attention. Every one looked at Roger.

He spoke again, as though continuing an address. "The American woman," he declared with a gesture, "aspires toward the whore."

Everybody laughed.

"What's happened to you?" asked Adriana.

Roger waited as a speaker waits for applause to subside. He spoke again. "There are twice as many tits as there are tarts," he declared categorically. It seemed to be a conclusion. He bowed. There was a burst of clapping.

A latent vanity led Augustin to the center, up to the card table. "What will you have!" he cried. "Having gained complete mastery of Mr Roger Flattery of the sporting page and the beau monde, my talents are now at your disposition. Shall Mr Flattery reveal trade secrets, or make a stink, or foretell the market, impersonate females, or confess how many times he has cheated unobserved?"

Adriana laughed and then checked herself. Some others laughed at her.

Augustin seized Roger by the wrist and held up his strong brown hand to the crowd. "Isn't it fun to take this hand and think of all the evil things it's done!" he exclaimed. When he offered to tour the apartment with Roger demonstrating the seven manual sins, a band of fervent disciples collected at once, though some guests stayed apart. The tour commenced; the disciples burst into bedrooms, kitchen, and bathrooms and obliged whomever they found to join them in witnessing the performances which Roger gave, without any observable signs of collaboration, to the sins that Augustin conceived. These sins turned out to be different from those it is imaginable that the disciples looked forward to, and two guests who had gone over to the band dubiously at the last minute were surprised later to find that, though they were stirred and even unsettled, nothing offensive to their taste had been done. Augustin took an artistic pride in his sins, that they should conform to the best literary canons. He paused and sometimes grunted with the shock of each new conception, each time believing that when it was performed by Roger it would bring about an upheaval in the mind of any witness, an upheaval with the hallmark of style.

He was in a rare way happy. "If I had only one wish it would be to be always in vein. Austin to be always in vein!" he whispered to himself.

While thus humiliating Roger he was proud of their partner-

ship, of walking at Roger's side, and looked up at him frequently in admiration.

"Yes, you're good!" he said as they walked down the hall towards the outer door.

A moment later he regretted his admiration. They were in the corridor outside the apartment, alone; the door was closed. For a long time they looked at each other in silence. He wanted to know if Roger had been in the bedroom with Adriana; but despite his power to get the answer he was unwilling to ask the question. To him the silence seemed natural, but it embarrassed Roger. "How is your mother?" Roger asked.

"Oh, she's all right," Augustin replied curtly, annoyed. He went close to Roger and reached his thumb and forefinger up to his earlobe and pulled it hard, to be sure that the drum inside would ache.

"Don't do that to me, please," Roger begged.

"Let's go inside," Augustin said. "You wait a while, then follow after me."

Inside, the party was beginning to disperse. In a short time nearly every one had left. The four—Adriana, Rho, Roger, and Augustin—returned to Adriana's.

"Now listen," Rho said before anyone had sat down, "nobody else is willing to say it, but I am. Everybody wishes to God that this little pest would go home now and leave us alone. So why let him get settled in a chair? Why doesn't somebody else tell him now, so he'll realize how much we don't want him?"

Both Adriana and Roger returned her look, but neither spoke.

"Oh drop that!" Rho exclaimed. "I'm not going to get ashamed of what I said! I'm sick of that stuff."

There was a long silence.

"Excuse me," Augustin said and walked to the bathroom.

"Why don't you make him go home?" Rho demanded of Adriana.

Adriana did not reply.

"Excuse me," Roger said and walked to the bathroom.

Adriana attached unusual importance to this. She seemed alarmed. "I'm afraid something will happen in there. I'm afraid Augustin will do something to him."

"Don't worry. Listen, in a few minutes Roger is going to come to

his senses and give him the licking he ought have had an hour ago," Rho said. "Why wouldn't you make him go home?" she asked intimately in a commonsense tone.

Adriana did not reply.

"All right! don't answer me! I'm going to get ready anyway," Rho exclaimed. She walked into the bedroom from which she had originally appeared. Adriana cleaned and straightened the room. She made several trips to the kitchen with ashtrays and bottles and glasses. At length the room was in order; she sat down and picked up the score of a ballet which had been sent her from California; and then put it down again. Augustin came out of the bathroom and waited for Roger, then took his arm. They walked together towards a large divan.

"What's the matter?" she asked, uncertain whether Augustin was assisting Roger or whether they were walking arm in arm.

"Absolutely nothing, nothing whatsoever," Roger replied in an epicene treble.

"Something has happened!"

"Nothing at all, just let me lie down," Roger said in the same unnatural voice. It resembled the bleat of a vaudeville comedian who is playing effeminate.

"What did you do to him?" she demanded of Augustin.

Augustin ministered to Roger elaborately in assisting him to lie down. He put three cushions under his head and took off his shoes, and later raised him up and helped him off with his coat. After lowering him back gently to the cushions he appeared to discover for the first time that during all his previous ministrations he had been carrying his barlow open in his hand, passing it from left to right as though unconscious of it while untying the laces of Roger's shoes. He took out a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the blade carefully. Then he shut it and returned both the knife and the handkerchief to his pocket. "That listerine is absolutely safe," he reassured Roger.

Adriana in an unchanged voice repeated: "I said to you, what did you do to him?"

"It was as easy as shelling peas," Augustin replied to her. "The only difference was that the pod wouldn't pop, you had to slit it."

He took a tobacco pouch from his pocket and dangled it before Roger. "They were as bad for you as a bad pair of tonsils, old boy. You'll get well in a hurry now. It'll make you fat and good-natured. Here!" He waved the pouch towards Adriana. She recoiled.

Rho entered the room wearing a kimono. "I've got absolutely nothing on underneath," she said, walking toward Roger on the divan.

"Keep away! keep away!" Roger bleated, putting up his hands in defense and whimpering. "Don't let her come near me! keep her away from me!" he whined.

"What's the matter?" Rho asked.

"Go back and put on your clothes," Adriana said, "and go home."

"What happened to him?" Rho protested.

"Go back and put on your clothes."

Rho attempted to dispute further, but Adriana insisted that she leave at once. Rho approached Roger and attempted to speak to him; he burst into tears that she could see were genuine. She cursed Augustin and returned to the bedroom. While she was dressing inside, nothing was said for a time in the living room. "I suppose you know that it's a criminal offense," Adriana remarked finally to Augustin; then as though regretting what she had said, as though afraid that she might be taking seriously what would prove to be a hoax, she said nothing further. Augustin did not reply. He took out his barlow and cleaned his fingernails. Adriana did not speak again until just before Rho's reappearance. "Well, whether it's true or not, I suppose I'll have to put up with you all over again," she said half to herself. "It's what I get for liking funny people."

Rho attempted to reopen the discussion of Roger's condition, but Adriana would not answer her and insisted that she leave at once. Augustin escorted her into the hall. He patted her hand, and she did not draw it away, perhaps thankful or touched. When the automatic car rose and halted he opened the door and courteously guided her elbow: as she was stepping in he kicked her savagely. Instantly he slammed the door and held it shut. She was swearing—possibly crying—inside. It was over a minute before the car descended.

Adriana had left the living room. Roger was fast asleep. By losing consciousness he had regained his independence and his virility,

it appeared, for he was muttering to himself in his normal voice, unmistakably bass. Augustin studied his breathing a while, then bent over and returned the empty tobacco pouch to his pocket and loosened his collar. On his way to Adriana's room Augustin stopped at the electric switch and turned out the lights on his enemy.

ROBERT McALMON

An Illiterate But Interesting Woman

Sappho Burrows was brought up amongst horses. From babyhood she played around the stables, heard the cursing of jockeys, the champing and neighing of restless stallions, and the trample of highstrung horses' feet as they reared and pranced about. Her father, a goldking, called Goldtouch Burrows, never thought to keep his loose women for town escapades. They came, bringing with them brawling males or semi-males, pimps, gamblers, seamen, or cowboys, and they had their wild parties that lasted through days and nights in the same household that Sappho grew up in. They called her kiddy, petted her sentimentally, and let her sample their drinks occasionally, though generally a moral streak developed in some one of them who protested that the kid hadn't ought to be started off so young.

When old Goldtouch Burrows died he left his two children great fortunes. Sappho's share was thirty million dollars. She was by this time twenty-five years old, twice married, twice divorced, and had spent the last five years travelling much in Europe and between New York and the Pacific Coast. Parties which she put on wherever she was were real parties. She had ceased bothering about marriage any more; she wanted companions; pals; good fellows; around her. She lived without financial restraint which was no extravagance on her income, but nevertheless she knew how to take care of her money so that what of it was spent was spent mainly on herself, or on people who entertained her. Wise guys didn't expect her to give out big gifts to her "friends." Under the influence of hashish, cocaine, morphine, drink, or love, she did not make reckless promises or sign papers casually. Generosity existed abundantly in her nature but she wanted value received for what she paid out, so in spite of a broadminded idea of value received she was at fifty a still tremendously wealthy woman. However lavishly

she spent money she also made sage investments, and an offer she once made, while intoxicated, of giving a million dollars to anyone for a new sensation, she made at that moment confident the money would repose safely in her coffers. By now her eyes were at times bloodshot and surrounded with unsightly wrinkles. In spite of corsetiers, beauty specialists, turkish baths, and costumers, Sappho was not beautiful, so that it was more necessary to relax with her money for companionship, because even wastrels and parasites would not stay by her and be her dear friends when all they got was drink and food, with a reputation that would in no way solve their future economic problems, or add to their desirability as guests in the outside social world. Consequently Sappho had several young men to whom she gave annuities or subsidies to help them in their art. One of these young men actually did become known as a dancer; another, on the strength of a two hundred dollar a month income, discovered that he was a Baron when he looked up his family line. He forgot and tormentedly tried to cause others to forget that his reputation in New York was about as savory as cold-storage turkey that has stood in the sunlight for three days.

Yet, for a woman who had led so complete a life, sampling every sort of human experience she could hear about, conceive, and be capable of understanding, Sappho remained amazingly naive, or fresh, or expectant and still ready to explore. She could not write very well except to sign checks and what few letters she wrote did not relieve her in moments when she wanted excitement, and she always wanted there to be something going on about her, people or events that were outside of her. Ideas didn't amuse her, from the outside, and as to ideas within herself—she had money, she could buy her entertainment. Occasionally she liked having a wild west story, or a detective story which involved a murder, read to her, but her interests were not literary.

Her hair had started by being coarse black; her cheeks ruddy red; her eyes brown; but by forty her hair was henna red and not burnished with gleam; her eyes were nearer yellow than brown, and her cheeks were green yellow with vermillion spots not too carefully placed. For twenty years Sappho's most constant companion had been a Tootsie Delnars, who had a fortune of her own, and who

knew how to be gay in her own name also. One time,—both Sappho and Tootsie were then well over fifty—the two of them were hailed into court over some lawsuit or other in which another person was trying to force Sappho to pay money. However Sappho was more wily than that. Her letters to Tootsie, and to this man that was suing her, were read, but that did not disturb her as they just showed she liked a good time. Sappho did not have ideas about how she should live; she lived; and oughtness did not bother her. One letter to Tootsie read:

"Dear Tootsie: You should have been here Thursday night. Nellie and I met a Mr. Dryer, and he seemed to be a live wire, and us girls wanted a gay time. You know we've been pretty quiet. He asked me if we wouldn't like to have dinner at the Alexandria with him, so we did and it was some party we had too. Two friends of his came along, and they all wanted to come home with us, but I pretended I didn't like that, because this Dryer looked kind of good to me—about forty-five you know, with curly hair, and tall and handsome. He looked like he'd have a big one and the others didn't mean anything to me. I'll tell you all about the rest of it when I see you. Yours truly, Sappho."

She signed all her letters "Yours truly," both because she was more used to reading business letters than any other kind, and because it isn't an involving signature she figured.

The last time she sailed to Europe, never to return she said with flashing eyes the papers said, never to return to the country that so cramped her style, never, not unless she had to because of this damned suit with that Gonger, the Swedish masseur, who was suing her, or at least his wife was, for her having alienated his affections though it was him that was in back of it all—the last time she sailed she said that she'd hired Gonger as a massage expert. "He was no good. He did some rough work on me so I discharged him," she exclaimed with flashing eyes, and her veil was flying in the seawind. The waves were high out in New York Harbor that day. The waves were wild; and Sappho was wild. She'd always been a wild woman. She looked more defiant than ever could the statue of Liberty as she stood speaking with flashing eyes and defiant draperies. Her flowing dress battled the breeze; anger

and perhaps the wind added colour to her cheeks; but these aids were not needed. She had money; she could buy first class colouring for herself without any seawind. But Gonger had been a rough workman; he had done some rough work on her.

So Sappho, who knew all there is to know about rough work and massaging, had discharged him and now his wife, through him—the two of them together—thought they could frame up some story and get a pile of money out of her.

That day, as on all gala days, though all days were gala for Sappho, she was bejewelled with flaring expensiveness of pearl necklaces, emerald lorgnette, and bracelets. Her gown was of purple brocade. Her veil was purple with butterflies over its edge. She wore a tiny dull hat, and smelled of Spanish Jasmine, and some new pungent odoured face powder. Her rouge was a new brand she'd forgotten the name of. Her seagoing cape she wore with a grande dame swagger. Sappho was going away from America forever to live on the continent.

But somehow for all the gaiety and colour of her dress she seemed not to emanate flash and defiance as she did in the days of yore. At a quiet moment she commented that all she wanted now was a villa on the Riviera so that she could live calmly. "I'm an old girl now, past sixty, for all my saying I'm only forty" she confided to a young journalist who found her amusing to talk to.

"There's nothing in it for me spending my money to amuse other people." Generously too she gave him a check for two thousand dollars so he could enjoy his trip abroad, simply because she liked him for treating her simply. "You know we ought to all pop off by the time we're fifty, hadn't we?" she queried, and then, being on deck with the salt wind coming to her from the sea and finding she stood straight and strong against it, exhilarated she added, "but this old girl's not dead yet. Not yet. I'll be good for ten more crossings, and when I get to Paris I'll throw a party—" she started to plan, forgetting all about her flashing eyed decision never to return to America, not unless she was made to.

E. E. CUMMINGS

CHAPTER I

THE king took off his hat and looked at it. Instantly an immense crowd gathered. The news spread like wildfire. From a dozen leading dailies, reporters and cameramen came rushing to the scene pell-mell in high-powered planes. Hundreds of reserves, responding without hesitation to a riot call, displayed with amazing promptness quite unparalleled inability to control the ever-increasing multitude, but not before any number of unavoidable accidents had informally occurred. A war veteran with aluminum legs, for example, was trampled and the non-artificial portions of his heroic anatomy reduced to pulp. Two anarchists (one of whom was watering chrysanthemums five miles away and the other of whom was fast asleep in a delicatessen) were immediately arrested, lynched, and jailed, on the charge of habeas corpus with premeditated murder. A dog, stepped on, bit in the neck a beautiful high-strung woman who had for some time suffered from insomnia, and who—far too enraged to realize, except in a very general way, the source of the pain—instantly struck a child of four, knocking its front teeth out. Another woman, profiting by the general excitement, fainted and with a hideous shriek fell through a plate glass window. On the outskirts of the throng, several octogenarians succumbed to heart trouble with grave internal complications. A motorcycle ran over an idiot. A stone-deaf night-watchman's left eye was exterminated by the point of a missing spectator's parasol. Falling seven stories from a nearby office building, James Anderson (colored) landed in the midst of the crowd absolutely unhurt, killing eleven persons including the ambassador to Uruguay. At this truly unfortunate occurrence, one of the most prominent business-men of the city, Aloysius K. Vanderdecker, a member of the Harvard, Yale, and Racquet Clubs, swallowed a cigar and died instantly; leaving to fifty plainclothesmen the somewhat difficult task of transporting

his universally lamented remains three and one-third miles to a waiting ambulance where they were given first aid, creating an almost unmentionable disturbance during which everybody lost caste and the Rev. Donald K. Wilkins received internal injuries resulting in his becoming mentally deficient and attempting to undress on the spot. Needless to say, the holy man was prevented by wrathful bystanders from carrying out his ignominious plan, and fell insensible to the sidewalk. Calm had scarcely been restored, when a petty officer from the battleship Idaho was seized with delirium tremens. In still another part of the mob, a hydrant exploded without warning, causing no casualties. Olaf Yansen, a plumber, and a floorwalker, Isidor Goldstein, becoming mutually infuriated owing to some probably imaginary difference of opinion, resorted to a spontaneous display of physical culture, in the course of which the former (who, according to several witnesses, was getting the worst of it, in spite of his indubitably superior size) hit the latter with a brick and vanished. Mr. Goldstein is doing well. While playing with a box of peppermints which his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Aloysius Fitzroy of 96 Hoover Ave., Flatbush, had given their little son Frank, Jr., to keep him quiet, the infant (in some unaccountable manner) set fire to forty-one persons, of whom thirty-nine were burned to ashes. A Chinese, Mi Wong, who exercises the profession of laundryman at 686 868th St. and Signor Alhambra, a millionaire Brazilian coffee planter who refused to be interviewed and is stopping at the Ritz, are the survivors. Havoc resulted when one of the better-liked members of the young married set, whose identity the authorities refused to divulge, kissed Tony Crack, iceman, on the spur of the moment, receiving concussion of the brain with black eyes. In the front rank of onlookers, a daughter of the people became so excited by His Majesty's spectacular act that before you could say Jack Robinson she emitted triplets.

But such trivial catastrophes were rapidly eclipsed by a disaster of really portentous significance. No sooner had the stock exchange learned what the king had done, than an unprecedented panic started; and the usually stable Lithuanian Kopec zoomed in seventeen minutes from nine hundred decimal point three to decimal

point six zeros eight seven four five, wiping out at one fell swoop the solidly-founded fortunes of no less than two thousand two hundred and two pillars of society, and exerting an overpowering influence for evil on wheat and sugar, not to mention the national industry (kerosene) all three of which tumbled about in a frightful manner. The President of the India Rubber Trust Co., hatless and with his white hair streaming in the wind, tore out of the Soldiers and Sailors Savings Bank carrying in one hand a pet raccoon belonging to the President of the latter institution, Philip B. Sears, and in the other a telephone which the former had (in the frenzy of the moment) forgotten to replace on his distinguished confrère's desk. A hook-and-ladder, driven by Abraham Abrahams at a speed of $(a + b)^{a+b}$ miles an hour, passed over the magnate longitudinally as he crossed Dollar Row and left a rapidly expiring corpse automatically haranguing an imaginary board of directors, and whose last words—spoken into the (oddly enough) unbroken mouthpiece of the instrument only to be overheard by John Hammond, a swillman—were: "Let us then if you please." So unnerved was the Jehu of the Clipton St. fire station by this totally unexpected demise that, without pausing to consider the possible damage to life and limb involved in a purely arbitrary deviation from the none too ample thoroughfare, he declined the very next corner in favor of driving straight through the city's largest skyscraper: whose one hundred and thirteen stories—after tottering horribly for a minute and a half—reeled and thundered earthward with the velocity of light, exterminating every vestige of humanity and architecture within a radius of eighteen miles. This paralyzing cataclysm was immediately followed by a colossal conflagration of stupendous proportions whose prodigiously enormous flames, greedily winding themselves around the few remaining outhouses, roasted by myriads the inhabitants thereof, while generating a heat so terrific as to evaporate the largest river of the kingdom—which, completely disappearing in less than eleven seconds, revealed a gilt-edged submarine of the U R type, containing (among other things) the entire royal family (including the king, who still held his hat in his hand) in the act of escaping, disguised as cheeses.

CHAPTER II

Thomas Feeney, master ploughman, leaned upon his plough. It was nineteen minutes past twenty o'clock by the good man's fifteen peseta watch. A vague radiance brimmed the vast cup of the east, exactly overflowing into the indefinite saucer of the west. Night had risen. A voice, interwoven with the chirping of amorous armadillos, wigwagged him to supper. It was his devoted wife, Gaga, who had just completed a pie well-liked by her spouse, and called (in the vernacular of the country) choopfg. The g is silent, thousands of raindrops had fallen, but the land to the left and right was still parched with drouth, as: "I am coming," he whispered at the top of a musical baritone voice. Gaga smiled, clenching a six-year-old baby to her bosom: Tom had heard her. Life, for this poor woman, held no sweeter solace than to provide indigestible nutriment for the gnarled visage which she had forced herself imperfectly to love. Suddenly, out of the lilac bushes, arose Henry Holt, the village drunkard. On tiptoe he approached the akimbo bride of Thomas Feeney. Sheep, one by one, crossed the horizon, each with his tail in the trunk of the animal just behind him. A linnet twittered wickedly. "No, Hen, not now," she managed to enunciate as he kissed her innumerable times, digging his spiked jimshoes into the slippery clay which constitutes a geographical peculiarity of that glacial morain to which a good five-fourths of the topographical eccentricities of the immediate vicinity owe their (to put it mildly) renown, and bracing his soi-disant back against a far from inconvenient eucalyptus tree, ilex methodicus. But the words had hardly become non-existent, when a night-hawk mewed dolefully. The ploughman had by this time, with an easily-overestimated dexterity not uncommon to the elder aborigines, escorted his two coal-black horses safely across a rickety footbridge which hung, like a merest cobweb, above the foaming waters of the Tihs, that unbeautiful estuary to which tradition has (whether rightly or no) ascribed miraculous healing properties, and was whistling to himself a curious mixture of The Anvil Chorus and Donna e Mobile, when an arrow transfixed his negligible brain and he sank to one vast knee,

dormant. Ominous owls began a ghostly dirge. "There," the cynical youth said with sinister composure, coolly pocketing his collapsible weapon (on the red-hot hilt of which the ten commandments were inscribed in Caslon Old Face, after the manner of the peasants) and inserting a new fuse which almost instantly blew out, leaving the environs in total darkness; but Gaga would not and could not credit her tear-stained eyes. "He is not, he cannot be dead," she wailed silently, and in another minute had broken loose and was galloping across the desert with a sprig of parsley in her mouth. This surprised even Holt. A shooting star occurred. Ostriches, nursing their incredible young, promulgated gently here and there an obstreperous resemblance to madonnas, and, in the middle distance, morning was already beginning to sweep out the bar-room of heaven. Ungently he collapsed upon his face, the bottle of cyanide escaped his left hand while the right yet clutched a paper rose. Eight seven nine the referee counted pitilessly, and with a bleeding nose he was on his feet in a second, bringing down the gallery in unmitigated applause which died as Sid Gimlet crossed an uppercut with two haymakers, producing victory for our side; whereupon somebody threw a bullfrog at the promoter, which missed his abdomen by millimeters and smote a perfect lady in the muzzle. An excavated horse, trampling his own transparent intestines, trotted almost to the gate and sank, while cloakmen upon cloakmen surrounded at a safe distance the inebriated bull and the espadas dropped their cigarettes and stepped into the chapel to pray, thereby causing the sacred edifice to consubstantiate without injuring the caretaker, José Fernandez (who was, as it happened, not present by the merest accident) while the Jefe, overcome, adjusted his cuff-links and took a swan-boat to Malaga with his favorite concubine, an English girl named Alice Peters. Rapidly crackers and chocolate were passed from hand to mouth, but you and I didn't take any, did we? How hot it is, one of them hazarded. No ventilation in these compartments, the Swede said to the negro. None whatever, Sambo replied crisply. Why should the soup not be served in skyrockets if they have no wedding rings? I asked, as the train swept onward at a snail's pace, emasculating pigs and lesser quadrupeds who were far too sleepy to pro-

test, let alone get off the track, where they had taken shelter from the torrential blizzard in spite of a large sign inscribed (in Arabic) "Rauchen Verboten." You got me, Lord Q. responded, spitting out of the half-open window through a cavity in his dexter eye-tooth, attributed by some to the Great War, and wiping his monocle on the seat of his trousers, at which a station collided with our train, upsetting the locomotive and two baggage-cars, and so we all got out and ate griddle cakes in the cheerfulest manner and just as if nothing had occurred you know. He was hermaphroditic, I think, the Count Cazazza murmured, obscurely referring to the engineer who had left two children, one a girl and the other a girl. Was he, Congressman Oswald Coles' third wife said coldly. A silence fell. Nobody could think of where we were anyway. A little boy tried to sell me a bachelor's button for five cents on the ground that he was hungry, instead of which I gave him my very last Flaubert. But what was this? Certainly not the whistle! But yes. Crocodiles could be seen in the background, cleverly harnessed to a gigantic water-wheel which made condoms at each revolution, and the guard gave me a sample specimen. Is this gratis, I asked him in Polish. That depends, he replied enigmatically, employing a quite untranslatable Sioux idiom. Yes, we were off and how glad we were, too, and we were positively stiff with cold also. It was a pretty sight to see his valet dusting off old Herr Hengist, the perspiring Danish prime-minister, with a broom made of selected peacock-feathers, and the celebrity was certainly grateful, slipping his servitor two monogrammed straw-tipped thracian firecrackers. All aboard! Rex made such a noise, said Pamela, that nobody heard what I said. What wrecks? I ventured. Yours, she replied, glancing. As I was wearing rubber tights underneath it didn't matter, and we were off. The air was so restful. Wheel-chairs everywhere. It's good for pimples even. Board! See that funny-looking duchess wearing a cork-jacket and a washable necktie. Dingaling. Keep your Sans and Luiss inside the Rey. Next station Nova Foundland. Aling. Who's got the button? Down in front! The angelus sounded.

CHAPTER III

You don't mean it, the pope said gruffly. I do indeed, replied the cardinal, wiping the foam from his lips. Not turnips, a monk whispered, taking the gloom-destroyer from his superior. Impossible, His Holiness muttered nervously through reversed moustachios; and a choir-boy entered announcing the hors d'œuvres, which were, in order of their appearance: a magnet, a universal joint, three jelly-tumblers, a cold chisel, assorted nuts, and a bevy of large differentials. Show them in! Pius thundered. Bang. The gates opened to admit Sir Alfred Horehound, dressed to kill in full duck-shooting regalia including the dawnsherno pasteboard ear-warmers, and crying, Room for the queen! Any luck? a three-legged catamite demanded casually, whittling pencils into the convex waste-basket, while the whole room echoed room over and over again. A brace of guinea-pigs and a crested nescepas was the hearty rejoinder, as the hero of the occasion, drawing a stiletto from behind his ear and plunging it slowly into a tame porcupine who was always in the way, ordered breakfast to be sent on to the loggia; which was manifestly impossible for innumerable reasons including the fact that it was cold and no one else understood Pakrit. Simply wonderful. Taking a sea-lion out of a watermelon he first deposited it in the goldfish-bowl bottomside up, causing an explosion which changed the color of everyone's eyebrows, and next, to the delight of all present, caused an angleworm to appear on the janitor's instep, but guffaws fairly rang out when seven six-hundred pound fairies began coming five by five slowly out of the graphophone horn, waving furious the Stars and Stripes and chewing colossal home-made whisperless mince-pies. Desperate as was the situation, Captain Dimple was not a man of anyone else's word, no. In a trice Edward had unfurled the tricolor and drawn his Spanish rapier clear to the nozzle, only to be seized by a stupendous octopus and disappear magnetically with a winsome splash. It was a moment never to be forgotten by nobody. Amelia, cowering, removed the Cherokee's dripping tomahawk from her recently scalped mother's head and without further explanation passed the smelling-salts to Aune Nabbie who micturated promptly in a golden thimble. Again and again

sandbags were discharged, but still for some reason the balloon rose until we were nearly out of sight except through Mac Adoo's telescope which Jasper had cleverly concealed in one throbbing armpit, while Chick held the discobolus by a particular kind of hypnotism which he had learned at Princeton by trying it on a cat. (Incredible as it may seem I swear he was found under my wife's uncle's bed.) Mountains! everyone cried, and we all were over the dead sea which was green but only Betty saw the intruder. With a bound, the faithful airedale was upon Charlie, who (full of buckshot) had only time to open his compass and sneeze twice when he stumbled, tripping on a three-quarters Morocco leather edition of Hafiz (expurgated). Sunlight came. The lovers did not move. A patented fish-net full of stuffed minnows appeared, closely followed by a royal bengal conundrum wearing eleven brown derbies and preceded by small-pox. Huzza huzza. Again an huzza. Drop that, a mucker half-said, picking up a microscopic stone the size of a chimney and putting it rapidly in deliberate contact with the silver-encrusted stomach of the incestuous Senator's pistachio-colored brother-in-law, who came to an abrupt end, dropping his spinach, and enunciated clearly: "What was that?" "Nothing, nothing, what time is it, roses, rabbits," his Esquimaux chauffeur murmured, busily dusting his master's eyes free of glass. The Peugeot, after taking another drink, glided on laughing and making hay now and now while the sun shines bright on the Old Kentucky Home for Homeless Girls. Just then who should out step, of all people, but I'll be damned if it's not no other than upon my sacred word of Hon. Harry Chilblains F.O.B. Detroit, wearing the inevitable nose-ring over a scarlet forsooth, or so to speak complet borrowed for his wedding-night by Cæsar, without taste, a gardener, as I live and breathe, no, yes really, a fellow of the lower classes, without exception, without permission. Next time ask, was all he said, but the syringe obfuscated, covering with ultra-violet ink a number of disinterested spectators. R.F.D. The poker game was still in progress and La La was beating her tambourine to Yes, We Have No when as a matter of fact Under The Spreading broke down and Jo-Jo the Dog Faced Boy recited The Coming Of The Hesperus, sobbing and chuckling until I personally looked about in the wastebaskets for

either of the three penguins, although she had solemnly promised his honor that there positively would be no larkspur this time, and by Jiminy Crickets just opened (as it chanced) helter-skelter to isn't it Daniel where he says there shall be rain, narrowly missing the incubator, because after all steward, if the little chap could have helped it, no Judges I think, it would be different, now I protest, can you spell perspicuity, as though Rome was built in a day, not mouses. Mice. Just a little wider, please. Would you say geeses. Define hypotenuse Wilbur. Hippopotami. Not gerania. Why Isabel. Columbus. Who was the Father of his Country? That's not funny. Yes, mother. Which killed Cock Robin? Say ah. Wrong. Ask your grandfather, S.V.P.D.Q.

CHAPTER IV

Once upon a time, boys and girls, there were two congenital ministers to Belgium, one of whom was insane whereas the other was six-fingered. They met on the top of a church-steeple and exchanged with ease electrically-lighted visiting-cards and the one who was not steering picked a rose and handed it to the waitress with the remark, "Urinoir gratuit." The other declared dividends. He was immediately escorted, under pressure, by seven detectives disguised as consumptive highwaymen, to a near-by railroad trestle, where in the presence of the mayor his head was lovingly and carefully removed and emptied of molasses candy. Such was the shock produced by this discovery upon the next of kin of the defunct that all four, attired in crepe de chine nightgowns, gradually rose to a height of ninety degrees Fahrenheit clapping their hands frequently. At that, a bare-back rider named Jenny Wells proceeded in the full view of all present to cross Niagara Falls on a clothesline stretching perpendicularly from the Woolworth Building to the Eiffel tower, by way of introduction twirling before her (with incredible skill) her maternal nephew, a little old gentleman in a gondola, on whom somebody with a sense of the sublime had pinned a label: "Religion is the opium of the people." Thunderous applause greeted the advent of capillary attraction, which convinced Herbert, who had wisely shot himself in the navel, that the dear-

hunting season was nearly over, particularly as a safety-razor, a tricycle, three elephant's teeth and a pair of brass knuckles were subsequently discovered in the unlocked suitcase, proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that spring had come in the minds of Lucy and Abner, not to speak of the hundred and fifty odd thousand mouse-traps whose deliberately mutual proximity considerably cluttered my already over-emphasized watch-pocket. A whistle blew, and the Bible was red. Typewriters darkened the air, protruding their enormous necks, and quacking, to the tune of Button Up Your Overcoat, while a single hairpin descended sumptuously through the arctic twilight, and Gertrude's new earrings hurt her very much indeed. Sheriff, I say this fish was easily over one inches long. "Sailors and soldiers too," Cousin Clem remarked, anent the unscrupulous and simultaneous olfactory emanations of a group of powerfully-built piano movers, situated just to the north of Plum Island, between Cadiz and Robespierre, with a beautiful outlook on the Bay of Naples; but as we were not quite sure whether the poison-gas had done its deadly work or no, a mongoose in a birdcage was tied with a yellow ribbon to the end of a sleeping steam-shovel and cautiously introduced into the dislocated environs of what had once been George Moore. The death-mask completed, the sculptor turned his own face to the wall and died significantly after drinking so many innumerable absinthes that it really was no wonder she divorced a man kind of like that, don't you maybe think? (Ralph answered by going to bed hurriedly with a pigeon in his pyjamas.) Restive, manœuvering for silence, bald-headed, ubiquitous, amaranthine, bi-sexual, the almost obsolete huissier heterogeneously rose and tapped the vice-president with his mahogany gavel on the exact center of the mons Veneris causing concealed consequences of a strictly peripheral nature not highly indigenous to the pathogenic circumstances attending Cornwallis's victory over Lars Porsena in A, B.C., hence let us now turn instead to page eleven and study column three, until I say "hottentot" in a voice so shrill that the candle extinguished the violin—more particularly since a base slander was covered with unripe homenculi, Clara thought, while C'est la vie murmured the mutilated prelate and the taxi skidded on encountering a perfectly empty cinema in

which sat the drunken chauffeur himself. Can you imagine that, albeit crippled with an acute case of obtuse indigestion, polyglot Dick was not unequal to the square of each other? Whiskies and sodas at five, gark, we leave for Subito on the four-fifteen, they whimpered, dropping the tea-kettle in her excitement, as its nomenclature cleverly evaded one diabetes after another. And really, it is simply miraculous how these pistils and stamens live together in the very heart of Newark, without so much as a policeman. If you don't mind, I consider that a quite unnecessary vindication of Doctor Thurber's interesting theory of the cryptogramic origins of applesauce.

CHAPTER V

Despite a large and inaccessible abscess which hounded his left ear until its death, making quite impossible the turning of somersaults and achieving of embroidery, Benjamin the Second (1200-1865) that best-loved monarch whose brief and innocuous reign is chiefly notable for the bestowing of the Antique Order of the Boston Garter upon a vigorous Iroquois savage named Francis Shakespeare—all eleven of whose unquestionably illegitimate and perfectly incorrigible sons consequently became the original & only nucleus of our well-liked Howdah of Peers (which if I may use a metaphor remains through countless generations the sine qua non of Borneo's ne plus ultra) died a shall we say virgin. His successor, a carefree pirate of the otherwise unillustrious Yapian navy, whom history, in its artless way, has for no good reason dubbed Ethelbert First, lived in a hen-house and invented after constant struggles the excessively dangerous No Afterglow safety-matches, which were not banished from the kingdom until sixteen centuries later, during which nonce or interim a series of inexplicable and epoch-making fires necessitated the entire rebuilding (at inordinate expense) of seventy-eight and four-ninths cities including Paris and one other. Next came Arthur the Good, who was left-handed and invented ginger-bread. A ruler whom little children will easily remember is perhaps Steven Thirty-Fifth, famous for having accidentally suffocated while being baptized at the tender age of 1 n/m minutes by the archdeacon Perfectus Magrew who, accordingly, succeeded with some promptness

to the suddenly vacant throne of Middle Wales under the mellifluous pseudonym of Heller Hal The Hundredth. Nellie, estimable and final spouse of the universally esteemed and not far from fertile latter, imitating the noteworthy example of her thirteen unfortunate predecessors, succumbed, as it were, to rupture, but not before having (subsequent to a heated discussion anent the relative merits of aspirin and quinine, popularly supposed to constitute a northing short of infallible je ne sais quoi against hives, indigestion and muchness) imbedded a previously sharpened bread-knife in the occiput of Finland's martyred lord, who expired after bestowing upon his Japanese cameryairy, Jan Jansen, the empire and all therein comprehended by prime right of suave qui peut and positive quid nunc, via thirty and three carefully forged documents of eighty thousand polysyllables each or thereabouts and not including the inevitable hieroglyphs. Of Harkon Ninth it is recorded that he could neither read nor write and therefore drowned little puppies before breakfast, watching with a singular smile the gradually attenuating efforts of the incompletely immersed victims, whereas Bald Paul Heinrich (otherwise known to his friends as "the porcelain dumbbell," for a misuse of which intimate synonym several of his multitudinous mistresses were electrocuted, convicted of having—at various times, generally when His Brilliance was asleep—engraved their all too copious initials in the unique cranium of the royal roué with the aid of screwdrivers, pen-knives, and similar wind-instruments) horribly collapsed while eating an anchovy sandwich and rolled smartly down three flights of heavily carpeted stairs into the ladies swimming pool which, unhappily, had only that morning been drained, with the not inexcusable idea of eventually locating the crown prince's long-lost binoculars. A cortège of reinforced Hispano-Suizas carried the victim of flatulence to a nearby windmill, where, in the presence of two thousand female urchins costumed as brownies and designed by Winslow Homer, who himself appeared just too late on roller skates having missed the six fifty-seven from Ipswich via Epsom, Heinrich was ground to atoms and molecules of him distributed gratis to all bakeries of the kingdom, as directed in his fifty-eighth will making all others perfectly invalid and poisoning a not inconsiderable number of to say the least

religiously-minded folk who (kindled by a well-meaning if extravagant patriotism) partook inwardly of such fatal trivialities as toenails or collar-buttons. Julius Blake, by profession the court moron, zero feet eight and decimal point naught seven inches tall, was presumably overcome with grief at the sight of his rapidly disappearing master's infratrouserleg; he thereupon regurgitated the snuff box of the astonished Marquis de la Blague, and was removed with unbelievable difficulty from the very apogee of the ceremony. A little-known fancier of gelded tarantulas who, as it developed, had openly and not infrequently responded to the libidinous nomenclature of Ike Isinglass, fell by hook or crook with a frightful oath into the unnoticing jaws of the pitiless crusher, dragging in his prolific wake twelve stalwart and well dressed offspring all above voting age and a protesting, because at the moment otherwise occupied in connection with a tree, cocker spaniel entitled Old Glory of ineffable value. Notices were thereupon served that tomorrow would be a holiday. This generous act provoked a small but far from noiseless band of illiterate Letts, headed by the brigand chief Alexei Kapoot, and brandishing in every conceivable direction an imposing variety of nuisance-making devices such as rattles, foghorns, and willow-whistles, to take advantage of the situation to elect one of their number ambassador in extenso to no less a geographical absurdity than Somaliland. A coup d'état followed, and no one was hurt, especially the imperial household who went hurriedly en bloc to the guillotine in evening dress on top of several excellent cocktails and a celebrated man-about-town who tripped through sheer carelessness on a banana's kimono and dropped five stories from a balcony—like a spontaneous meteor—into his own but recently acquired chapeau de forme.

CHAPTER VI

Any questions? Professor Smudge asked slyly, biting his ear. Forsitan et haec. Tell us why was your anti-Semitic son rejected by Hollywood, Mrs. J. Diddle fired roughly at random, shaking the very bosom of the palpitating audience composed of troutfishermen and umbrella-menders with a liberal sprinkling of coal-miners.

Tictoc. For stroking the crew, madam, a Rutgers man answered, prettily swooning from the lowest chandelier at the rate of thirty-two feet per second into any one of seven nickelplated cuspidors, five of whom being occupied by detectives in search of their usual objective (a dangerous criminal named Jerry R. Toboggan, which was smoking cigarettes incessantly and playing strip poker with ourselves in crachoir number four.) Da. It was a very very warm indeed spring morning for October 31st, 1600, and, hanging by his second best teeth from the incomparable summit of snow-clad Mt. Christopher, André Dodo (the deaf and dumb guide) remarked with some truth and incredible sang froid through his nose: "Frankreich Über Alles." At this insult Cuthbert could not contain himself any longer, and (protecting with one foot his sister) bitterly exclaimed: "That landslide was I think produced by vibrations and they should really not permit the larger alarm-clocks to function at such altitudes." (Anon.). YOUNG g. look. S. Amer., sér. high éduc. g. danc. and sports l. for relat. with nice lady not older than, 25. Nobody, however, knew where Father had put little Mary's step-intos and all because a Greek who spoke no English took cowardly refuge in his mother tongue until goaded with sudatoria and nail-scissors, when his brother's octaroon vividly exploded, doing no harm. Hush. Recip. desint. absolute., discr. Electriclight-bulbs, exactly eight centimeters apart and weighing twenty grammes each, were born on Wednesday to the conductor's astonishment, who thereupon was lynched and found to contain a live duck. Selah. They slept with a paper napkin between them until someone objected who would trust a mere immigrant's testimony. Prosit. Well, even if my Dudley were intoxicated he would still be your mother's only son, a tenor voice lied crisply by wireless, proudly exhibiting her bright new husband and lamp-posts brought from Afghanistan to take the place of those which had been killed in the struggle between the Wuchuma-Kawlits and the Uno-Hoos, lonesome wasn't it? Carramba. Yes indeed it certainly wasn't; not like last year anyway. Do you weesh feesh. And as for Ada's deleteds, why they fitted Zoe perfectly (weather permitting). Stop. Although nobody might have guessed it was the nitrogenous corpse of Monsieur G., an Armenian ventriloquist of note, Mars being in

Saturn with apologies to Pavloff, had not dear sweet kind good old Dr. F.'s fully patented but strictly mysterious televisionary apparatus suggesting from one point of view Geraint and Enid and from the opposite angle a pedigreed electric iron played what the devil's name is that why can't I O yes of course, Annie Rooney, some thousands of millions of millions of billions of ad infinitum ultimately astral æons later by Robert's selfwinding Ingersoll sundial. Wuxtree! Wuxtree! S. O. S.! The sum of the squares of the other two sides!

CHAPTER VII

The day was a dark one. Ivan Ivanovitch had just, however, completed his tahsedy shokolah; and the Heavens were lowering with snow, when the bootblack entered, bearing in his wrong hand Hood's poems and in his right a loose-leaf edition of the internationally almost unknown encyclopedia irisher. "Is there a man named Stumpf here?" he asked nervously. Igor Smolinsky did not let the grass grow under his friend's feet: "Yes," he answered, and an hush reigned. "Indeed," mommur Baklanovich was muttering as she attempted to raise her rhododendron, "it is hard times. My father lived under the 3rd Régime. We ate neckties. All of our family did not know the meaning of—" but at this instant a drosky lumbered pettishly past the post-office, out of which conveyance leapt (rather than stumbled) Damorovsky himself, wittily attired as Santa Claus, and waving somebody's gold napkin-ring upon which the initials P.H. had been engraved, with a pulfg (penknife) a little under the minute hand whose point indicated three of twelve. "Jiajajhgna (good-day poppur)," they all shouted in unison, as the dogs set up their usual yelping and Dmitri Fukk seized up Olga Jerkhov's lithe body in one arm while turning out the gasjet with the other hand. And honestly, you wouldn't believe there could be so much anyway darkness on land or on sea or on both, even Patrick was frightened and as for Lysol. The wheels fell off, moreover, and a snowdrift closed, with all its inhuman appurtenances, over their heads; but not before but never mind what. As far as that goes, we are all human—even Gobolink,

with her moustaches, etc. . . . don't be unnice. (Pushkin.) The Tsar "Artemus-Hoyle-O'Reilly-Timkins-Y.-Flaherty-Ball-Bearings-Thanatopsis-Sleeve-Valve-Theodore-Commupence-Jones" knelt lugubriously to oneside as Alderman Jonathan Wise supported His Reverence's corresponding eyelid although Harold was the only one strictly speaking who had learned Dutch at the quite unmitigated age of desuetudinous puberty. Franklin's lightning-rods—of what use? particularly when there is not enough thunder. That's after all's said and done the questions, thought Alyosha dizzily. The volga made Amy feel all warm all over as only Karl knew. A goat braid. Far off, the Ural Mts. loomed, for all the world like nothing whatever, sunlight soap excepted, and a realization that complete futility was at the end of every rainbow smote each and every flower in the crannied wall, rendering Bill's ukalute harmless. Yes. It was then troo. It was t for 2 and versa for vice. He had guessed. No moocheek could put it over on him. Nix. Yuhbetsha. A pterodactyl, nothing morenorless. And blond, too. How kumb? "Pleaz parse the thoymossbottil, Lutetia." That was all he said he didn't go into details he was too proud he might have though he had every excuse he thought he was right u.c. and I suppose let us here bid fond ajew to Harrison and welcome Fisher is the best policy. A fortnight later, while The Serene and Lofty Totem Sir Fred Wishbone extracted an uneaten caterpillar from the indigestible sprig of virulent lettuce served, that very evening, by the waiter at the command of his superior at the Plaza which is one of Bagdad's sinuously extra-exclusive hostelries if I do say so, a dernier cri announced to an imperishably waiting audience of hyperdesiduous celebrities that Fritz Wigwam's saxophone was anxious to accompany Hans Dumplin's oboe by way of paying a final homage to the exeunt omnes of unfortunately defunct but improbably external Baudelaire; quite as if the worm had not turned as Demosthenes forgot to say to Herodotus, not to omit my own experiences in the cyclone-swept plateaux of Chiliconcarne (Texas) which bear out to the very letter everything determined under gravitation plus or times Plank's constant and to Hell with Madame La Princesse Crystabelle Nina Consuelo d'Aujourd'hui née indistinctly but nevertheless Smith, who invented

radium as a means of preventing her husband from dissuading her from the path of incoitusterruptus unlimited, all rights reserved in foreign countries including wussia, and thereby bridged the chasm between Omnia Gallia and devisa est, to the immense profit of Peru, the glorification of Moses, the inhibition of Ulysses F. Grant, and the in your ear utter discombobulation of the semi-annual dinner of the Independent Order of 3 cheers for Penn Coronacorona Amsterdam, Illinois (period) with which words (comma) being a man (comma) as we say where I do not come from (comma) of limited vocabulary (semicolon) I bid you everyone 1 (won) happy 17th of March as I lift my E. Pluribus Unum to the health of he who raised Rebecca from the well eye never mind you don't tread on me too grandpapa prika is the best flavoring for a men. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

Interested since her birth exclusively in strangeness in beauty, the murmuring anteaters, an occasional wollef, or native attired only in a passport milking his drowsy rhinoceros, above, the wistful membrane of heaven lazily punctured by stalacmites, stalagtites, etcetera, and other occupants of the compartment, seemed as naught by comparison with a grove of the expansive doow-der trees through which her train passed from time to time, threading its way in or out with so much skill you almost forget that we were subject to the laws of tame and spice, until finally in a mass of cerebral foliage they all stopped, and after an equatorial downpour the passengers got out and sunned themselves openly in the sunshine, hanging themselves up here and there all over the mountains by their ears and tails, so that it was very picturesque.

Carefully adjusting her sand glasses, Edna gazed over the brink. Three thousand feet beneath, Bmow, the sacred river, exhaled its thunderous mist through which, now and again, all the hues of the particoloured rainbow played, while just below, on a jutting crag, a small group of worshippers, equally unconscious of her and the terrible beauty of the scene, were lolling under prickly umbrellas hollowed from the cherubic fruit of the elp-paen-ip, and at the same

time watching, out of the corners of half-closed eyes, their herds of busily nibbling aphides.

When she turned her head night had already fallen. A quorum of pedunculate herons, four or five trillion in number perhaps, circled ominously in the narrowing slit of dusk. A single star thirstily beckoned beyond the fragrant terror of the jungle, in which voluminous frogs grunted incessantly. To her surprise her father, seated upon a toadstool, mushroom or whichever it was, in the exact middle of the tent which was already illuminated by interminable fireflies was reading the lord's prayer. Touched, she kissed his left wrist.

With the agility of lightning Henry Hogg rose to his feet, firing both barrels of a .44 Winchester into a drove of peccaries seven and a half miles away as he did so. "Lord, how you scared me, child," the old man, caressing his treasure, murmured as an unhappy shepherd in the act of peeling a cocoanut through which most of the shot had passed in transit fell almost immediately in terrible agony into the fire.

The blue-eyed issue of the green-eyed banker of thirty-nine, sometimes entitled by his respectful associates "Old Hen," and by those nearest him in the flourishing real-estate office of H. Hogg Inc., 93 John Street and 1 Maiden Lane, affectionately known as "Bubbles," raised her adoring visage to his. "Daddy," she poutingly chided, "you're nervous."

He looked at her, slowly, musingly, from the tips of her dainty mules, the latest thing in Brussel's lace, to the brim of her translucent sombrero, the Ultima Thule of mad Madrid. How like her mother he thought, wonderingly. Pride swelled within him, bringing to his tireless eyes a natural tear.

"It's those damned ægospotami," he murmured huskily.

Edna laughed gaily at this little slip, then she frowned, remembering well how, only a few days before, the crowded eonac (canoe) filled with gesticulating natives, which had served as escort to the party's steam launch during the crossing of the Sirotilc in spate just south of Anigav, had been bouleversé by one of those mammoth amphibians and its contents devoured in plain sight of all. It was remarkable how well everyone had stood this trying ordeal. Mrs. Hendricks only had fainted temporarily.

"How's mummy," she said coyly, changing the painful subject.

"Poorly," "Old Hen" replied, reloading his gun with care. She watched him. How strong his hands were, hairy and strong, the efficient hands of a check-signing broker with just a suggestion of the gorilla, yet there was something ineffably tender about them. It was as if within the gnarled fingers a secret softness lurked, ready at an instant's notice to steal forth and show itself in its true colors. Strange hands, rude yet sensitive, such as Rodin might have loved to sculp, or Velasquez draw. She felt glad that these hands belonged to her father, and sighed.

"Still vomiting," Mr. Hogg added, the process completed.

The remark was how like him. Nothing wasted, crisp and to the point, yet so accurate! Edna awoke with a little start from her dreams.

"Daddy," she said smiling, "don't worry for my sake."

The worrier kissed her, and picked up the Bible, sitting down with the gun on his knees. "Something around here smells bad," he stated briefly.

"Maybe it's the toadstool," quick-witted Edna replied without hesitation, wondering if it was a mushroom as she regarded its vast stem and huge upper part which housed her progenitor easily.

"Burning," her sniffing daddy corrected, drumming with his heels on the extraordinary freak of Nature as his hands lit a cigar.

Hogg's slim darling was silent. The acute smell-sense of "Bubbles" for which he was justly noted, so much so that his enemies contended that it extended even to money, was of course not unknown to her. She herself smelled nothing whatever, except the expensive Quelque Fleur tonic which her father used on his, alas, rapidly thinning hair three times a day. The beautiful name and the odor itself reminded Edna of nothing so much as her childhood, and especially summers spent in the luxurious Seabreak mansion, rented by her father from the impoverished scion of an ancient but decayed family, Larry Bing of Nahant and Salem, whose much-photographed sister Gwendolyn had eloped with Prince Doogon only to be divorced, 36 seconds later, when the nobleman ascertained that his beautiful and cultured bride was as good as penniless.—Adv.

ROBERT CANTWELL

Hanging by My Thumbs

For, I repeat, it would be wrong for me to say that I do not understand her. I understand her as well, I think, as I will ever be able to understand anyone. I know somewhat how she thinks, and, to some degree, the things that interest her. In this I must confess that my knowledge is largely negative, I am more familiar with the things that do *not* interest her, and since she was never reticent about it, this list grew continually, developed, contradicted itself, and presently took in everything I had formerly admired. Indeed, I feel now that I might make up a great list of the things that bore her, and under various subdivisions, to indicate the extent of her irritation, present her more illuminatingly than any graver composition would. And this great list I could draw up so very easily, with no more effort on my part than that required to put it down on paper, for at one time I lived with a certain furtive hope of someday, by some process of elimination, discovering at last the formula by which her moods were controlled. I do not mean that this list would be no more than a simple catalogue, or a few paragraphs like those offered by visiting celebrities on the features of our civilization they find most displeasing; no, as I visualize it I see it would be a very long and involved affair, with a great many asterisks, and with long notations that would run along the bottoms of the pages for explanations, or perhaps it would all be parenthetical, exploring one simple dislike. Or, taking another view, it might resemble more charts like those of tides and trains than a variorum edition of Shakespeare; for *time* to her, at least during the period of my greatest anxiety about her happiness, had become a positive executive force, driving her to a restlessness that seemed to me (I do not say that my feelings in this regard were not heightened) to amount almost to apprehension. Of what I did not know. Only that when she found herself obliged to amuse herself for a

time, she approached hysteria as nearly as girls of her age, possessing as much vitality, can. But here, too, her reaction was perverse; I do not think that she ever regarded an hour as 'leaden', as anything but a fraction of a life that she must have thought of instinctively, as brief. So the moments she spent alone, or in the company of anyone that bored her, must have seemed as fleeting, as senseless, as the hours she spent asleep. Yes, the hands of the clock must have seemed to have become suddenly attached to some greater force than that small coiled spring, the ratio of those involved gears must have changed, the hours must have passed as fruitlessly, as artificially, as they do in the movies, when we observe the hour hand leaping spasmodically ahead, to indicate the passing of time. So her evasion of sleep, until weariness had forced it upon her. How many times have I watched her slowly disintegrating under sudden and complete exhaustion, her eyes closing with the lower lids rising slowly, so that her eyes seemed to be filming with tears; her features dissolving as though with pain. Now in some café, coming off the dance floor, now riding home in a taxi, this sudden, and to me always astonishing collapse of her vitality would occur, and after a short, vague, and amusingly desperate struggle she would fall asleep, like someone giving up the ghost; lying unembarrassedly upon the table, or, reluctantly, in my arms. And I would watch her while she slept, her small fine features still troubled, the tiny line still crossing her forehead; yes, I would think, sleep has to fight for her as we do, and as unsuccessfully, and wins her as much against her will. . . . Knowing me, you will understand that it was at such moments that I loved her.

But to return to this great time-table of her moods, to the things that distracted her. For these things, too, came under the influence of something incoherent and contradictory, and what pleased her on one occasion, might, and very likely would, on another leave her cold. Now I have said that she lived in apprehension of loneliness, but I do not think any of us seemed more to her than slightly differentiated shapes, or had any more reality than the faces in a crowd in the street. And I have said that time had become a compulsive force in her restlessness, but I do not believe that she was more than vaguely aware of the season of the year, or whether or

not it was raining, or that she ever knew exactly the hour of the day; indeed, I doubt that she did. Vague and general as all this is, if I should draw up for my own satisfaction an exhaustive record of the changing phases of her boredom, she might adopt, overnight, a new attitude, a new 'personality' and my formulas would become automatically obsolete; I should find myself like some gambler who had perfected a system for winning at roulette, only to find that the rules had been changed. If the matter had been left in my hands I would have asked no more than to go on as I had, to draw up some larger and still more complete record, in which these abrupt metamorphoses should be taken into account.

I have said that I understand her. I do not mean completely. I understand her well enough to know that if I should show her this, and tell her it was about herself, she would show no pressing desire to read it, and probably no desire at all. And this, I think, is illuminating enough, if you will but consider for a moment the almost universal desire of human beings to hear what others think of them, though they know such information is, in the main, unessential to their happiness, and for the most part biased and incomplete. I can almost hear her say, "Why should I read it? I know what you would say about me," and nothing could ever convince her that she does not. For if in the course of this I should achieve some wonderfully illuminating phrase, some concealed and revealing aspect of her personality, it would raise me not at all in her eyes, or increase her respect for my perception; no, she would still think she had known I would say that, she would immediately think it must be obvious to the most casual observer.

I thought at first to begin this by saying that I understand her, but find myself unable to believe that I understand. I rejected that beginning not because it seemed untrue but because it seemed affected. Yes, I understand her, but what I cannot believe in is her vitality, or that all wisdom can be intuitive. So in periods of doubt and distrust I suspected her attitude as being only some superior sort of pose; something that one might reasonably arrive at after going through all the anxiety and irritation that we feel in the most casual and the most friendly companionship; all the necessity for forgiving people the things they say, or for their failure to respond.

For after years of this I could imagine her, with her curious quality of natural sophistication, and with her belief in herself, rejecting all this as extravagant and unnecessary, and placing herself firmly on the only base she could believe in, her own desires and her first response, though the response be unkind to the point of cruelty, and her desires illogical to the point of hysteria. This conviction I held was a faltering sort of conviction at best, it disappeared entirely when I was around her.

The knowledge that we all appeared to her without difference beyond a few obvious externals, gave me a great deal of courage. For though it meant that any enthusiasm in our affair would be strictly limited to myself, I felt that the impersonality we possessed would keep her, in a measure, content with my affection; and though she might never regard me as in any way superior, it was a natural corollary, that, barring some stupendous disappointment, I could not be inferior enough to cause her to dismiss me. I do not remember that she ever did. I cannot remember the exact circumstances at all. I only know that, as is always the case with these staggering revelations, it occurred at a moment when I was totally unprepared for it. All the time I had been carefully experimenting upon her, not coldly, for my own pleasure, but with all the tenderness I could find in myself, to promote her happiness; all this time I had been regarding all the things that bored her as being boring *in themselves,* and not considering the obvious conclusion, that they were effected by her surroundings, in brief, that I bored her, that she could not be happy as long as she was with me.

I pretended, later, that if her affections could but have centered on some person I could respect, I should not have minded so much. And this, it seems to me, indicates somewhat the moral havoc that she worked in all her lovers as she left them, like a mark of some secret order. For having so often derided this attitude in others as absurdly unnatural, I found myself clinging to it desperately, not because it seemed a plausible excuse for my suffering, but because it seemed to indicate that I still possessed, in a measure, my self-respect. Actually, it did not matter at all. I would have felt quite as miserable if, say, Schnitzler, had been my successor, instead of the youth who followed me. Looking back over what I knew of her

history, it is true that I could see logic in the succession of her lovers, nevertheless, I would have been no more shaken to learn that she had taken up with Trader Horn than I was when I discovered her with this inarticulate, unimpressive college student with an absorbent mentality that always seemed to me to be like some great piece of blotting paper. For when this fellow read anything, or perceived anything, the result after it had passed through the confusion that must have existed in his mind, was so blurred and distorted it resembled, more than anything, those curious pictures transmitted by long distance telephone. I observed this young man carefully and with resentment. I listened to his simplest speech for some sign of the excellence I felt sure he must possess, but all that I ever observed was a certain fatuous contentment, a certain parasitic willingness to draw from her appalling vitality and simplicity the color that his own sedate and prematurely dignified round of life did not offer. . . .Once he confessed to us that his ambitions lay no further than a teaching fellowship in English in the college he was now attending, and that he should possess, at so early an age, an ambition so moderate, seems more illuminating than anything I could say about him. Altogether lacking in mental vigor, his physical vitality seemed to me even more open to question; very tall he was, very stooped, and a great pair of spectacles so fitted his features they seemed almost as much a part of them as his nose.

I could not avoid her. The circle of our friends was too intimate for that, too firmly bound, and while I tried to conceal myself by arranging my visits so as to miss them, they were forever bursting in on us, in the middle of some quiet evening, extravagantly gay, and usually intoxicated; such interruptions seemed to me a sort of *keying up* for some inferior drama that could never state its issues, or develop its tragedy. I cannot forget one evening when they stopped in at my apartment while Alfred and his wife were visiting me, being, Marie explained, under the impression that I was giving a party, and that a girl named Edith was there. I never discovered the connection between this Edith with any party that I ever gave. Indeed, these meetings became so frequent, based on so many such flimsy excuses on their part, that I eventually decided they were going out of their way to cause me embarrassment; I avoided

our common friends for a time, to see if they would follow me, and discovered only that I had overestimated the extent of their malice . . . At any rate, on this evening, the tragedy seemed more coherent, mainly because it had for setting a scene that was, for me, painfully fraught with memories of our affair. Repton was of course delighted to see her again. All exhibitions of simple vitality stimulated him enormously, and I suppose his wife later listened to a long and careful explanation of the parts of our relationship they could not discuss with me, a long and patient and probably accurate working out of its various phases in a vocabulary too lucid for me to employ.

Intoxication, or, perversely, my presence, had stimulated Marie to a gaiety all out of proportion to our response to it. Her lover, who had been following her in placid bewilderment through all the scenes of picturesque abandonment that she loved, professed to know something of Repton's work, and more probably, was only familiar with his name. I heard him say something about Melville, and could imagine the rest. For first of all, this comparison, which always delighted him, was altogether without foundation; for the very freshness of vision that makes Alfred's simplest observation seem so brilliant and intense, has become so overdeveloped that it contributes, it seems to me, only to the weakness so apparent in his later work. What I mean is this: Alfred relating a search for an apartment makes it seem as exotic as those travel narratives of the earlier oriental explorers, the reader finds himself marveling at the stupendous cleverness of overlapping shingles on the roofs of houses, that the rain dripping from the porch has drilled tiny holes in the pavement so cunningly composed of sand and cement. And his landlady, instead of being the crippled and weary old woman she is, becomes a creature capable of anything, she might go insane, she might weep after relating her story to him (which indeed she does, while he creeps silently down the darkened stairway into the quiet evening); she might stab herself, which I suppose she does in the earlier versions before his wife has toned them down. So, having gone over all this with Alfred so many times before, I felt free to observe only Marie, with astonishment, it is true, at a certain tenderness that displayed itself in a few simple endearments, such as her contracting his name, which was appropriately Buford, to *Boo,* and,

less obviously, in her rather affecting desire to make her lover appear as desirable to us as he seemed to her. Normal enough in any other woman, in Marie this seemed a tremendous concession. What could account for this sudden enthusiasm for culture? Did it mean that she loved this boy, that she had been taken in by his pretentious and affected knowledge, or that loving him, all his qualities had assumed a special importance? This idea griped me intolerably. Confident that my own slight culture was superior, I now considered it only a technical error that I had so carefully concealed it, lest it bewilder her. Thus our affair had been largely a matter of attending dances as though they were exhibitions of some curious folk culture, and going to vaudeville as though we thought it opera. And I felt rather constrained in the narrow space of a life I had never been particularly drawn to, or knew a great deal about; at best I must have seemed but an uncommunicative and thoughtful sort of Omar Khayyam. If I could have danced better, if I could have played hockey, if I had been a banjo player, she might have understood me, she might have loved me. As it was, I found myself almost unable to dance with her at all. Her very body seemed vibrant with some interior excitement that was forever threatening the restrained rhythm I naturally adopted. It was like dancing with some too tightly coiled spring that might explode at any moment in my arms. And now and again, observing our reflection in one of those long mirrors that are almost invariably on the walls of such places, I would see us in our unhappily methodical walk, and would envy again the supple and dexterous Italians who circled the outer spaces of the floor with such violence and accuracy. As for Marie, I always had the impression that she was dancing, mentally, with someone else. . . . Now on this evening at my apartment she confessed to Alfred's wife—the only confidence I ever knew her to make about her lover—that *he was so cute with his glasses off.* And analyzing that remark, I perceive that with Marie love was only a sort of continual undressing, a delighted removal of layer after layer of the reserve in which we conceal ourselves, and that, having nothing to conceal, or pretending to have nothing to conceal, I could have been from the first no more than a disappointment.

I have neglected to say that Marie was only nineteen, the student

but two years older. So, perhaps, in their common youth she found something congenial, or perhaps at that age all people in a similar circumstance discover some absurd and secret method of amusing themselves that those of us who are older are blinded to, that age has made seem ridiculous. At any rate, whenever I observed her, she seemed content. She seemed, indeed, happy. I imagine I fancied life had grown intolerable. All through the spring I endured the spectacle of her happiness, trying desperately all the while to recover some of the contentment I had felt before I had known her. But if life had grown intolerable, which seemed even then an extreme attitude, it was not so much because I was unhappy as it was because I felt old and aged beyond happiness or unhappiness, because I slipped so easily into the untroubled habits of life that had been mine before without experiencing any of the pleasure they had formerly given me; for now my contentment was disturbed with (at times) a perverse longing for the more spectacular and exciting scenes I knew in my heart I would not enjoy. For I felt, not convalescent, but hopelessly invalid from our relationship, as though she had left me, not tormented with love for her, but in the midst of suffering caused by those incredible and unpopular diseases which sometimes accompany these affairs. So, I say, I felt old. Sometimes rousing myself from my reading, to discover that darkness had fallen, sometimes allowing a conversation in which I took no interest to flag, I would walk to the window and stare blankly and sadly at a scene that had never attracted me before, the lights of the city. And peering down into the tangle of those streets I would see myself with her, prowling through them in a brilliant taxi, violently gay, delighted with the simplest absurdities, spending our youth as though we thought it inexhaustible, or as though we thought our days numbered, and the eventual catastrophe at hand. And always, for this much I will say for my honesty, for always I thought, in those days, in the past tense, I might have been some dotard revisiting the scenes of his childhood. Tragic as the thought of age and impotence is, still more tragic seemed the feeling of being both aged and impotent in my comparative immaturity, and it appealed more to my sense of drama. So when I left the city I must have worn an aspect as saddened as though I were being

exiled to the lepers' colony in the Philippines instead of only to the beach to visit the Reptons at their summer home.

Greeting me, Repton told me, with great pride, that I had landed in the mad haven in the Euxine sea of *daphnis insana,* which had a secret quality to dementate, "for," he quoted, "we are a company of giddy heads, afternoon men, it is midsummer moon still, and the dog days last all the year long." Peering over the porch that seemed to support itself over the cliff in defiance of all natural laws, by will alone, I took this statement in sober faith. For the house, instead of being on some quiet beach where Repton's means would reasonably have allowed him a modest cottage, was situated in what seemed to me the least attractive, the most incomprehensible site in a noisy and inexpensive resort where both abounded. Living on a cliff that overlooked a great tourist camp, where the continual spectacle of tents being raised in the middle of the night, or being taken down at dawn, gave me the impression that I was spying upon some great insane army on the march. At the end of a long street lined with concessions and unbelievably simple amusements, life swarmed around us all day and all night, as though somewhere in the hills some reproductive dam had burst and flooded the streets with humanity. Walking down to the beach we waded through the surf, immersed up to our necks. Unsuited for rest, because of the violence of the racket going on at our very door, it would have appealed to no one on earth except Alfred, whose enthusiasm for the more picturesque qualities of our civilization now exceeded all bounds. Each morning he lowered himself into the auto park like some diver sounding the depths of the sea, peering into the lives of the simple and communicative people there with a naturalist's curiosity at the submarine life he observed. . . . Over him, watching his progress, his wife and I manned the pumps. When he returned at last, climbing the steps as though he were pulling himself hand over hand up the rope that bound him to the world, he would relate to us long accounts of astonishing trips of eight hundred miles a day, as enthusiastically as though he had just returned from one himself. Or he might go at once to his study, where I fancied he was compiling the great catalogue of our age. Or sometimes, strangely silent all day, at dinner he would quote some pun-

gent sentence distilled from the chance remarks he had overheard in some bowling alley, or some pool hall, developing it, expounding it, as though he thought it some extraordinary philosophical truth. I could not join him in this game, nor could his wife. Some natural embarrassment restrained us, some feeling that, attired in our diver's suit of impersonality, staring through the thick porthole in our helmets, we must have seemed far more absurd to the people we were observing than they seemed to us.

Now the only reading that Alfred would allow me to do consisted of Melville and others of as much vitality. The Henry James, for instance, was locked in his study, I would as soon have thought of asking for the doctor book when a child, as to ask to look at them. And Alfred's wife, with great simplicity and charm, was forever pointing out to me the infinite variety, the enormous richness of life, until together they shamed me out of my moroseness. I began to look back upon the past few months with a certain amusement, tempered only by the knowledge that I had made an ass of myself, and that I still loved her. So I spent my days quietly, reading with determined pleasure, and looking for moonstones in the gravel on the beach. . . . On the third of July, expressing some uneasiness, Alfred informed me that Marie had wired that she was coming with some friends to visit them over the Fourth.

I think that I was pleased. Confident in my newly acquired aloofness, I welcomed an opportunity to display it before them, that they might realize that their kindness, their missionary zeal, had not been in vain. Yet when Marie arrived, still extravagantly gay, with the college student still following her, his bewilderment now turned to positive pain, his long face so terribly gaunt, I felt, more than anything else, a desire to leave the place at once. Sitting at the piano, Marie sang in her husky, sensitive voice all the songs she knew by heart, until something of the shock we felt at No Man's Mamma, with its malicious refrain, *I can come when I please, I can go when I please, I can fly flit and flutter like the birds in the trees, Because I'm no man's mamma now,* until something of the pain her lover felt at this, which must have seemed to him some terrible public admission of his inadequacy, touched even her, and she stopped abruptly in the middle of the chorus to make a slight

show of affection for him. If I had thought I would be pleased to see him dismissed as I had been dismissed, I had not foreseen the uneasiness that affects any spectator of any human suffering; for if I had been miserable, this boy was in agony; if my days had been so empty I felt I lived in a vacuum, with a greater pressure within me than the atmosphere could balance, his days must have seemed, literally, a "rain of ashes from the sky." Still her complete ignoring me helped me somewhat in my desire to appear with dignity in Repton's eyes, but I could not conceal altogether the hurt feeling I experienced when I discovered she had thoughtfully brought a friend with her to keep me company; a girl with an ardent and acquisitive mind, whom Marie's lover, in one of those moments of malicious inspiration peculiar in those whose wits are dwindling, had apparently given the impression that I loved, above everything else in the world, philately.

The irritating *Boo* had been forgotten. She scarcely spoke to him at all. When, from habit, she dropped it with some other endearment, the pathetic eagerness with which it was received was almost more than we could bear. Now on the evening of the Fourth of July we had passed through the stages of embarrassment usual to such gatherings, uneasiness and distrust in the morning, intoxication and abandonment in the afternoon, and, at nightfall, a weariness and a contentment so profound it made our original plan, to dance in the open pavilion at the water's edge, seem as absurd as though we had intended to spend the night walking on our hands. All day we had roamed about the beach, playing simple-minded games that Marie invented, that called for precisely those surroundings, and for the frame of mind we were in. Standing at the very edge of a great dune on an unfrequented stretch of the beach, she would carefully slaughter each of us in our turn with an imaginary revolver, and we would plunge, each of us in our turn, down the slope, rolling about nearly smothered in the yielding sand, half buried in the avalanche that followed us. Then Marie, as though in agony of remorse, would dive headfirst after us, not falling cautiously as we had, but diving as recklessly and as gracefully as though she thought the space between was full of water, plunging into the sand as though she expected to pierce it, joining us at the

bottom with her features obscured, the sand clinging to her wet bathing suit, struggling to conceal the disappointment she felt that substance so attractive and plastic should turn out to be so clinging, so firm, and so stifling. All afternoon this insanity continued in varied forms, until nightfall found us rinsed of all vitality and all emotion, lying half asleep, immeasurably content, in Alfred's largest room. Outside the night was explosive with a mysterious and telegraphic clatter. Very faintly the sounds of the celebration reached us, muffled by distance and our resistance to it, until it seemed no more than stage property to our extreme contentment. The girl with the ardent and acquisitive mind, finding me as disappointing in other things as I had been as an authority, had grown silent at last. Lying on the floor, on the long couch, we lay in our various attitudes of repose, while the gas flame that burned in the imitation fireplace sucked the vitality out of the very air. Lying there in a perfect and soundless intimacy all life seemed suddenly suspended in our immaculate content, nothing could pierce it, not the sound of horns blowing so persistently in the auto camp, and no, not even Marie, when she came bursting in after her bath, though she ruffled its surface in the same way a wind disturbs the smooth flow of smoke from our cigarettes when some outside door is opened. Now she stood there in the middle of the room, appealing to us all impersonally, *Are we going or not?* Refreshed, carefully made up, her excitement undiminished, she seemed like some child ordered to go to bed in the afternoon. So deeply were we imbedded, her persistence, her eventual irritation, seemed only unreal and vaguely annoying. Encountering our resistance she turned to her lover, and with many mild insults, repeated her question to him. He made no reply. He was lying on the couch, his hand thrown over his eyes.

Now, I thought solemnly, if this could go on forever. Staring at the flames of Alfred's mechanical fire, so unbelievably steady they seemed not flames at all, but a row of blue flowers that gave off heat, my mind roved for an instant on a plane so exalted I should not have been surprised had the people around me, instead of talking to each other, begun to sing, or if, opening their mouths, only vapours as from some fragrant cigarette should be allowed to escape. And I thought that if someone should start the phonograph, and play

Black and Tan again, it would go on forever, that inconceivable trumpet would play on forever, and no one would have to get up and ever turn it off.

No one started the phonograph. Marie returned from the porch, where she had gone as violently as though she intended to leap from it. Whatever she saw, rockets exploding soundlessly to be followed, moments after, when their light had died, audible, illogical proof that a rocket had burst, that one had not seen a vision; or whether it was the people massed like swarming ignited fish, something had stirred her beyond restlessness, to a decision of her own. Standing beside her lover, she said, "Are we going or not? If you're not, I'm going alone." Her lover straightened on the couch. All day, I suppose, he had been enduring her neglect, and suffering from her gaiety, until now this command must have seemed as intolerable as though she had ordered him to leap with her off the porch and plunge into life in the shortest possible way. Rising now from the couch, his head held theatrically in his hands, his eyes, naked of their protecting glass, seemed so bloodshot, so distended, I thought of Marie's description of them a few months before, with a feeling as near to horror as my exalted condition would permit. Or, to be exact, it was with faint and uneasy remembrance, swept away immediately, due perhaps, to a foreboding of some shock to my peace, by a thought of how they must have seemed to her then, shy, embarrassed, and no longer pretentious and filled with confidence. "Christ!" said the student. The word seemed to drift upward from the deep pool of our contentment like a word spoken under water, when we see it, in the form of a bubble, rising so swiftly it might be carrying the secret of the universe to the surface, bursting at last soundlessly with no more meaning than that implied in a few ripples on the water. No, not altogether soundlessly, for an unmistakable sound of disappointment accompanies these submarine words, a deep, a solemn blub, as though the force necessary to project a thought through a medium not naturally our own, had robbed it completely of all apparent sense. "Christ!" said the student again. Fearfully, we made ourselves deaf. Avoiding each other's eyes, we stared upwards, and watched the words breaking on the

ceiling of the room. "Christ, oh Christ. Why can't you leave me alone?"

I pictured him moving his head slowly from one side to the other. Very subdued his voice was, very childish, he might have been talking in his sleep. "I don't mean anything to you, I never did mean anything to you. You don't love me, you don't want me, you don't want anybody, you don't respect me, you don't like to be seen with me, sexually I'm not satisfactory; why, in the name of Christ, can't you leave me alone? Can't you see I don't want you either? Can't you see all I want is to be left alone? Can't you see I don't love you and I don't want you and I don't want you around me? And I don't. . . ."

I looked at Marie. She had stepped back and was staring at him in bewilderment. That was all. Only bewilderment. There was no comprehension, and no pain. Only bewilderment, and the beginning of a faint disapproval. . . . The rest of us lay there in a silence grown suddenly rigid and intense.

Then he made this incredible statement. Bluntly and shockingly, in a monotonous child's voice, he made it a part of the indictment he must have been composing as he lay there in the deep quiet of our contentment. Marie stepped back as though she feared some terrible physical violence at his hands. She backed blindly across the room, her hand involuntarily flying to her mouth, a gesture I have often seen in the movies. I led the student outside. Repton followed me, and on the porch grasped *my* arms firmly, instead of the student's. The boy stopped talking. The bold air seemed to revive him, until, staring up into the sky, he saw a great star burst convulsively into a thousand fragments, and the little globes of blue light fall softly and disappear, he must have thought he was indeed mad. Burying his face in his hands he began to cry. Repton led him away, talking to him in what seemed to me an unknown tongue. . . . Back inside I found them busily forgetting. The girl Marie had so kindly provided for me was playing the phonograph, yes, the very Black and Tan that would have seemed but a moment before the summation of our weariness and our extreme peace, and now those hot and subdued notes sounded troubled and obscure to the point of neurosis. Sitting down I watched Marie. Her face was

very white beneath its makeup, beyond that she showed no emotion at all. Presently, as Repton did not return, another silence fell, and Marie, misinterpreting it, made a brave attempt to recapture her indifference. Presently she asked, *"Well, are we going or not?"* and immediately, as though fearing some horrible mocking laugh might follow her, she ran swiftly from the room.

Now I seized an apportunity to prove to myself, that in spite of a thousand convictions, in spite of a thousand disastrous experiences, nothing gives me greater abandon than a chance to make a fool of myself. So I followed her into the night. Running down the path, shouting her name, I caught her at last to inform her breathlessly that I loved her. To be exact, I said, "Don't feel bad, Marie. Don't go away, I love you. Don't feel bad." And Marie looked up at me with her features so distorted I might have been watching her through a rain-washed glass. *"You damn fool,"* she said viciously, *"can't I go out if I want to?"* Returning to the house, where they were waiting for me on the porch, I told them Marie was going down to the city, to watch the crowds. Saddened and subdued, they turned away, as though I had told them she had drowned herself. Then we stood watching the fireworks that were approaching crescendo as though reaching the summit of their passion, great spiraling bursts of fire that faded before we had time to trace their pattern on the sky. Now a great globe of fire hung suspended for a moment, bursting with a convulsive writhing as though in agony of spirit, and while the globes and the lights were drifting to earth, Alfred turned to us and said, gravely and quietly, that he enjoyed a good exhibition of fireworks better than anything else in the world.

WILLIAM ROLLINS, JR.

The Obelisk

CHAPTER ONE

A DESERT; waste of hot yellow, with bare and polished boulders glaring at the sun. Huddled together is a colony of huts built of pyramided sand. Its inhabitants are naked and their bodies are black and slender at the waist, and they walk with their hands as well as with their feet.

Across the desert they drag a huge dead body. They reach a hut and climb the side, and the carcass, dragging among them, leaves an indented path in its wake. Three or four descend the hole that leads down, down, to the center of the earth. In a few moments they reappear; and the body is torn limb from limb, and then dropped down the small black hole. . . .

They move along the highway, single file. When one meets a friend he stops to rub noses; then he journeys on. . . .

And now comes a figure lumbering across the desert. It crawls on its belly, and its long fat body is a mass of bristling hair. It drags past the colony looking neither right nor left; reaches a boulder; lifts its stupid head and climbs over, moulding its body to the rock as it does so. Then it lumbers on as another beast appears, coming from another direction.

This beast is smaller, but it is big and swift, and its black body shines like armor. The natives appear and pour down the sides of their huts, and they stand waiting for it.

It crosses the sand, heading straight for them.

Lewis lay with his head on his arm, trembling as he watched the open sandy expanse. His hand stole to his side and found a stone; he lifted it and held it poised over the enemy. Then, suddenly, he drew back his arm and whirled around to his other side.

But now he was in the middle of a jungle, where long straight

spears brushed his face and rose out of sight. Way over his head they met in a green wall; but down here they were creamy white and he could see each separate root, he could see the long aisles they made in the dark soil.

A squat, bloated beast came trudging up a long dark aisle. When it neared Lewis' eye, it stopped short and looked at him with its own pinpointed eyes. Then it came on, straight for him.

Lewis lay very still, holding his breath. If he could just pull his knees up close and dig his head between them, then he would be safe, like in a house.

"Gee-dap, there! gee-dap!" A faraway haywagon came creaking along the road beside the meadow. Suddenly he jerked up his knees, clasped his arms about them, and dug his head into their dark safety, shutting his eyes tight.

Nearer, nearer, came the *creak . . . creak;* but nearer still was the secret dry whisper of the meadowgrass, the strange softness of his green bed, the enervating warmth of the sun.

"GEE-DAP, THERE! GEE-DAP!" The voice was passing the meadow now, harsh and real.

Lewis jumped up, slipped through the fence, and ran down the street. Dragging his left foot, he jerked breathlessly up the steps to the back porch. He pulled open the screen door and ran into the kitchen where his mother stood beating something in a large bowl.

"Mamma, Mamma!" he cried, and he hugged her tight around the legs.

"My goodness, how you startled me!" His mother slid the bowl on the table and swooped down to him. "What is it, dear?" she asked.

"Mamma, there was a big black thing killing a lot of . . ." He hesitated, thinking of the world beyond the protection of the safe old house, the world of those silent naked people walking on their hands and feet across the burning sand, of the swift black thing in shining armor.

"A lot of what, Lewis?"

But it wasn't ants; that is, it was—something different. But she wouldn't understand. Though he pressed himself tight against her, she would never, never understand!

"Lewis! tell me! what is it?" she cried, shaking him.

"It was . . . ants. . . ."

"Ants?" She gave a laugh and another little shake and straightened herself. "Goodness, what a scare you gave me!" she said, reaching for her bowl. "Now run along and play and don't fill your head with a lot of non—Lewis! whatever *is* the matter with you? Look, Lewis, look!" She jerked up his chin, wet with streaming tears, and showed him the bowl. "Look, Lewis!" she shouted above his howls, "I'm making some cookies here, and you can have a couple just as soon as they're done! . . ."

He was going to have a cookie! Singing, shouting, he slammed the front screen door behind him, thumped across the piazza, and descended the steps.

"I'm going to have a cookie!" he shouted. "Mamma says I can have a cookie!" he sang, "a cookie with raisins in them!"

The morning's sun was bright and the steps was a safe island, and the ants and things might roam around the faraway meadows and even the lawn and street as much as they pleased, but they couldn't come on his island because he was going to have a cookie! He sat down, stretched out his feet, and leaned way back. His mouth fell open and he gazed up at the sky, picking his nose.

The top of the sky is high, oh so high! but there was a place for him, there was a place for everything in the world, for God and the angels and the toad Herbie Mackaye squashed; they were all up there in their places in a great, great hall, just like down here!

Lillian says there isn't any top to the sky. That's crazy! because he could *see* the top!

And he floated up . . . up . . . up . . . wafted on the warm-smelling breath of baking cookies. . . .

Herbie came racing his tricycle up the sidewalk with Kenneth running beside him. When he reached the foot of Lewis' walk, Herbie whoa-ed and climbed off.

"You got to come on these steps," said Lewis, "or you'll get drowned." The boys hurried till they reached the bottom step.

"We're having our house painted," said Herbie. He stopped and

looked at Lewis' house. "Why don't you have your house painted?" he asked as he seated himself.

"I don't know," Lewis replied.

"You never have your house painted, do you!" Herbie went on. "It's because you're poor, isn't it!"

"No, we aren't poor! My father's got lots of money!" Millions and millions and millions——

"He hasn't got as much as mine, has he Kenneth!"

"No!"

"Hasn't he?" Lewis turned from one to the other; but they both shook their heads.

The girl who just moved into Hervey's house was coming up the street. When she reached Lewis' lawn, she commenced to look for fourleaved clovers.

"Beauteous night oh night in love!" she sang as she searched.

The boys sat still and watched her. She looked up, and seeing them, she walked slowly toward the steps, singing shrilly. Lewis glowered at her.

Millions and millions and millions and millions—I bet I can lick her!

She reached the post at the foot of the steps, clasped her hands about it, and commenced swinging, her eyes on them as she sang.

"Fleeting dust nary turn . . ." Her voice rose higher and higher. Suddenly she broke off and said: "I'm going to be made into a boy pretty soon."

"What did you be a girl for first of all if you want to be a boy?" asked Herbie.

"My mamma wanted me to. I'm the only girl in our house. My father's a dentist."

"What's your first name?"

"Josephine Harriet Johnson."

"How old are you?"

"Seven years old—how old are you, little boy?" she asked Lewis.

"I'm six years old, going on seven!" Herbie cried; and all in a breath he demanded: "What church do you go to?"

"I'm a Catholic."

Lewis' eyes widened.

"Are you a Catholic?" he demanded.

"Gee, I wouldn't be a Catholic!" Herbie declared, getting up and pushing her from the post in order to swing himself.

The girl stepped away and watched him.

"Why?" she asked.

"Aw, I don't know. I just wouldn't. . . . It's bad."

Motionless, Josephine and Kenneth watched him swing around the post, while Lewis stared at the girl who stood in the shadow of Father Murphy's black terror.

Lucy came up the street. Her face was grimy with dried tears, and she was eating a cookie. In a moment her baby sister came running after her. Her face was grimy with dried tears, and she was eating a cookie too. When she was right behind Lucy she slowed down and commenced munching.

Lucy came up the walk. She carefully stepped on the lines that caked off the concrete.

Her baby sister followed, trying to imitate her. She gazed at the mark a moment and lifted her foot. Then she stood, swaying and grunting, and finally brought it down, short of the line.

"She's a Catholic," Herbie said, pointing to Josephine.

Lucy's mouth stopped wide in midchew, and she gazed at Josephine. Her baby sister leaned sideways to look around Lucy, standing on one foot and munching. She swayed a little, grunting, and then toppled over. Lucy glanced back at her, turned once more to look at Josephine, and then recommenced chewing. . . . But Lewis still stared at the girl.

She had entered that great arched doorway where blackness yawned inside, with tinkling of faraway bells, faraway chant of awful omen, black, black ominous carriages—*she* was a part of it, shrouded in its leprous darkness, and she was bringing it, ominously, terrifyingly, through the bright sunlight to his very door!

Lucy had seven playing cards. She sat on the bottom step, below Lewis.

"Now I'm going to play whist," she said, and she laid the cards in a row.

"How do you play it?" asked Kenneth.

"I know, I know!" screamed Lewis. "Those are hearts and those are diamonds and those black ones are, are the wicked ones!"

"Are they bad?" Kenneth asked, leaning forward to see.

"They're awful! They fight the others and kill them and eat them up!" the Knave of Hearts in his handsome glittering garments, gay as the morning sun, the Queen of Diamonds beside him, most beautiful of them all; lying protected only by two little hearts from the King of Spades, hideous, black-robed ogre, priest of darkness, lurking in the shadows of his great pointed doorway to pounce on them and drag them back again into swallowing nothingness. He saw Lucy pat the three black cards, and he shivered.

"They're not either bad!" he heard her say. "They're nice! They're lots nicer than those old diamonds! I hate diamonds!" And suddenly she pounded the Queen with her clenched fist.

Lewis jumped to his feet.

"You leave her alone!" he cried.

"I won't either! They're my cards!"

He jumped on the black cards, scuffling his feet. Then all at once he sat down hard and pulled his feet up under him. He had scraped mud across the ogre's terrible face, and the seven and nine of clubs were bent and torn!

He looked up and saw Lucy gazing at them, and the tears slowly came to her eyes. She stooped and took them one by one and wiped them carefully on her skirt. Then she tried to bend them straight, pressing them gently, so as not to break them.

For a long time he watched her without moving. Then he stooped to help.

"You leave me alone!" Lucy burst into tears, and picking up the rest of the cards, she started down the walk, crying as she went. Her baby sister stared at Lewis a moment; then she turned to follow, hurriedly trying to step on the caked-off lines. Herbie had mounted his tricycle and was moving away, with Kenneth at his side. Only the big Catholic girl remained, swinging around the post again and eyeing him darkly.

"Skiddoo, you!" she screamed at him. "Skiddoo, you! skiddoo!"

Lewis sat very still, staring after Lucy, his lip quivering. In his

ears rang the frightful scream, liberated from the pointed death-chilly doorway, from the black, slowrolling carriages.

"Skiddoo, you! skiddoo, you!" it screamed at him.

But if he sat very still and didn't look at her, she might forget him and go away. . . .

dreary, dreary, dreary, dreary. Sitting just beyond the stream of afternoon sunshine, his mother pedalled the softsounding sewing-machine. In the darkness of the corner the shadowy form of Grandma Hopkins was stooped over her book.

dreary, dreary, drear— The machine stopped as Mrs. Raey shifted the waist beneath the long needle.

In the silence that filled the room Lewis glowered at the Spanish soldiers. Each was on a red dot in the carpet, and their tin bodies and guns glittered in the sunlight.

dreary, dreary, dreary, dreary—stop.

He glowered at the powerless soldiers with the pentup hatred for the dreary, dreary world of mothers and grandmothers and sunfilled sewingrooms that surrounded him, for the shadowy world of black-robed ogres lurking beyond. He took careful aim and shot his marble.

It rolled through two soldiers and off the carpet, onto the floor, rattling noisily in the machinestopped stillness. His mother looked up.

"Don't do that, Lewis," she said. "Someone may stumble on it and break their neck! Now go pick it up!"

"I don't want to, Mamma! Not now, I got to kill——"

"Lewis!"

With a baffled whimper, he jumped up and ran across the room.

"He oughtn't to be playing marbles with his Grandfather Raey lying dead at the undertaker's," muttered his grandmother. She grabbed him as he stooped for the marble. "Come here, Lewis!" she snapped.

He pulled, but the strong hands drew him to her.

dreary, dreary, dreary, dreary. . . .

He looked back, seething with hate, at the motionless, unmolested soldiers. Then he was jerked off his feet and was sat in her lap, where one of his legs felt the sharp point of her knee, and the other side of him floundered in the folds of her black silk dress.

"Don't you know your grandfather's dead?" she demanded.

Mrs. Raey looked up.

"Mother! you shouldn't tell him that!" she said. Then she started pedalling again.

"Nonsense!" replied the old woman. "I don't believe in this keeping children in ignorance! You understand, Lewis? Poor, poor Grandpa has gone away! He'll never come back! never, never again! Poor Grandpa!"

dreary, dreary, dreary, dreary. . . .

Lewis twisted around and looked up at her sunken face.

"Where's he gone?" he demanded.

"He's dead, I tell you! dead! Don't you understand that?"

The machine stopped.

"Of course he doesn't," murmured his mother, smoothing the cloth. "Don't expect a little child to understand that."

He listened, and he thought of his littleness, of the dreariness of conversation and of the whole world. He slumped deeper into the humpy lap. The soft hum of the machine commenced again in the glitter of the sunlit room; *dreary, dreary, dreary, dreary . . .*

Grandpa was dead . . . dead.

"Has he gone with—with those black things?" he asked, half to himself.

"What black things?"

He stared at the vibrating needle, his mind seeking; and suddenly he looked up again.

"And won't he bring me any more candy?"

His mother's soft laugh rose above the sound of the machine. But his grandmother shook him.

"You've got no more feeling than a cat!" she exclaimed. "He's dead! don't you understand?"

He tried not to slide deeper into her lap, grasping her knee and feeling for the hard floor with his feet. But she held him firmly.

"Doesn't it mean anything to have your grandfather dead?" she cried.

"Let me alone!" he gasped, kicking his legs around. "He's dead——" He wrenched himself free. "I don't care if he is dead!" he grunted, running away from her.

He was bursting now with hate, and he rushed across the floor, glaring at the calm, motionless toys. He thumped down on his backside, grabbed a marble and aimed it at a soldier.

"Grandpa's dead!" he cried as he hurled it at him.

He knocked over the soldier and in ecstasy he grabbed another marble. It was so easy to kill them all and fix everything!

"Grandpa's dead!" he shouted, throwing it and knocking over two soldiers.

The machine stopped.

"Lewis!" cried his mother.

He snatched up all the marbles with both hands and rose to his knees. He had to kill them all before they reached him, before his mother, his grandmother or Lucy could stop him.

"Grandpa's dead!" he roared, "Grandpa's dead!" And he threw the marbles with all his might. Most of the soldiers were knocked over and the marbles rolled in all directions, off the carpet and onto the floor, filling the room with a great noise.

"Lewis!" shrieked his mother, standing up, the waist in her hand, "you come here!" and his grandmother was pulling herself to her feet, grunting and snorting.

"Just a . . . naturally, heart . . . less child," she gasped.

But Lewis was jumping up and down, dancing, waving his arms. He'd fix it so they wouldn't do it any more! he'd kill them and then everything would be all right again!

"Grandpa's dead!" he howled as he kicked them, stamped on them, squashed the life out of them. "Grandpa's dead! Grandpa's dead! Hurray, they're all dead!" And with an earsplitting yell of relief he darted out of the door, followed by his grimly silent mother and the barking voice of his grandmother, that snapped short with a grunt as she slipped on a marble.

But in his bed that evening he watched the green elephants march in solemn procession through the gloom across the wall paper. The liquid twilight above the western hills was slowly thickening as wisps of black curled downward from the zenith, and the shadows on the eastern wall became fainter and fainter.

And now new shadows were darkening the southern wall. They were cast by the noisy purple streetlamp outside, and the light was

white like the ghost of the light of day. In it the shadow of the silent clothespole that stretched its arms motionless through all time, grew blacker and sharply outlined. The shadows of the bars at the foot of the bed slowly awakened and stood facing him, each at a measured distance, feeling the darkness fill their forms with power. And along the line of bars, and across the open space to the clothespole and the swallowing darkness of the doorway, marched the green elephants, each with its head low and its trunk *almost* touching the tail of the one ahead.

Grandpa was dead. He had gone into the darkness where things crawl about and call like voices far down a well, or like voices across a lonely meadow at twilight. He had gone into the darkness below that reached up into the blackness around his bed and under his bed and beneath the line of marching elephants.

Grandpa was there, lost in that darkness, crawling with the crawling things, calling with a faraway voice, lifting his eyes to Lewis' bed, raising his hand, slowly . . . slowly——

SOMEthing punched the bottom of his mattress! He sat up with a cry and pulled the blankets around him.

He heard the drone of voices on the piazza; the *creak . . . creak* of his grandmother's rocker.

"Mamma!" he wailed; and then stopped quickly.

The name vibrated in the loneliness of the room, and the watching bars and invisible things stood still and listened. He heard the deep *tick . . . tick* of the great clock. He knew it was lifting its head out of the hall below, into the darkness of the hall right outside his room.

He opened his mouth, but did not call. He watched the steady outstretched arms of the clothespole. What happens to the green elephants when they reach the darkness of the doorway?

"Mamma!" he suddenly shouted.

And suddenly he heard his grandmother's safe voice beside him.

"Lewis?"

"Grandma, something punched me!"

The room was alight and the shadows had vanished. He clutched her hand and his eyes clung to the old clothespole, standing safely on the old carpet. "Tell me a story, Grandma," he whispered.

"I don't know—wicked, feelingless little boys . . . well. . . .

"Once upon a time, in the North Country, there lived a little girl. She was the most beautiful girl that ever lived, but she was very, very poor—are you listening, Lewis?"

"Yes, Grandma."

"All she had to eat were the wild strawberries that grew around the hut. She used to go out in the morning and—*flash! goes Grandpa's face!*—are you listening, Lewis?"

He jerked back from the clutching darkness.

"Yes, Grandma."

"One of them was made of copper and glowed like the stars at night. One of them was—*flash! go buzzing faces!*—ARE YOU LISTENING, LEWIS?"

He desperately forced wide his lids, away from the yawning horror.

"Yes, Grandma."

"The dashing steed flew up . . . and she . . . the moon. . . . He took her on his horse and they rode on and on and on and on and—

ON! *flashes Grandpa, buzzing like a bumblebee, a short sharp buzz as he flashes by his eyes. Dead face, white face, staring straight at Lewis'. "You can't go in the door!" he shouts, "you've got to stay outside!"*

High looms the doorway, pointed, black and silent doorway. Lewis runs and runs and runs, skimming down the street; runs through blinding aching light, getting always closer when

ON! *flash faces, dead eyes, horrid eyes; snap him back a long way from the cool dark door.* "LEWIS, ARE YOU LISTENING?" *they shout as they go buzzing by, "you can't go back inside again, you must keep going*

ON! *on and on again!*

ON! *on and on again!*

on, on, on, on, on, on, on, on, ON!

CHAPTER TWO

Lewis watched the sunlight creep across the blackboard, blotting out chalked words and numbers with its glare. He watched Miss Tilden, the second grade teacher, lift a page; hold it while she finished reading . . . and then let it fall. He looked across the room at Clarence Dacy who was being kept after school like himself. Clarence was staring at the clock.

A hollow click; it was quarter after one!

Clarence scraped his feet across the floor. Lewis hesitated; then he coughed. But the teacher continued reading. He rested his head on his arm and watched Clarence.

Clarence came from down the Village. Once Lewis walked way over to Concord Road and looked down the hill; and while he looked, a long funeral procession appeared from between the crazy unpainted tenements, black carriages, coming one by one, regularly, slowly, neverendingly, with the beating of muffled drums. Clarence comes out of that street every day on his way to school, he thought, and he's probably a Catholic.

"You boys may go now. . . ."

They ran into the entry, grabbing their caps, and clattered down the broad dark stairway and out. Side by side they walked along the street together, neither speaking.

"Gee, it's hot," murmured Lewis at last.

Clarence cleared his throat and spat through his teeth.

"Where do you live?" he demanded.

"On Adams Street. You live in the Village, don't you?"

Clarence swung around.

"What's it to you if I do?" he snapped. He glared at Lewis, his eyes narrowed, his jaw thrust forward.

"Nothing." They slowed down to a halt.

Clarence's eyes continued to watch him, half closed. He cleared his throat again; turned and spat into the street; and then turned back to stare at Lewis.

"I'll kick hell out of you!" he said.

"You will like fun."

Clarence took a step closer and his jaw stuck out again. Lewis stood still with his hands in his pockets.

A bee floated on the heat waves above Clarence's head.

"Look out for the bee!" Lewis cried. "He'll sting you!"

Clarence whirled around and watched the bee as it drifted, moaning, over the heavyscented wildrose bushes. Then he turned, and they walked on in silence.

"Geewhiticker, it's hot!" Lewis declared after a moment.

Clarence's hands were in his pockets and his eyes were on the asphalt sidewalk, glittering in the sun and clinging stickily to their feet.

"You think just because you're rich you're pretty big, don't you!" he muttered.

"I aren't rich . . . no more than you are."

"Oh, no, you're not! Oh, no! of course not!" Clarence's voice rose shrilly. "I seen you buy a creamtart this recess!"

"They only cost three cents. Mamma gives me five cents recesses when she's in town, so's I can buy my lunch. What's that?"

Clarence stopped again.

"Do you know what I'm going to have for dinner?" he demanded. "Do you know what I'm going to have? Bread and tea! Just bread and tea!"

Lewis stared at him.

"Does your mother let you have tea?" he asked.

"If she ain't drunk. When she's drunk she licks me and locks me in the closet." He eyed the sidewalk, his jaw set. Suddenly he looked up at Lewis. "What're you going to have for dinner?" he demanded.

Lewis stared back at the thin white face and stary eyes. Then suddenly he grabbed Clarence's arm.

"Come on over to my house!" he cried. "Mamma'll give you lots and lots to eat."

"She will?" Clarence asked wonderingly.

"Sure she will! She'll give you meat and pie and everything! Come on!" He put his arm around Clarence's shoulder and started off. When Clarence hesitated he tightened his grasp, "Come on, Clarence!" he pleaded. "Mamma likes me to bring my friends home!"

They reached Lewis' back steps and he pulled Clarence into the kitchen. At the foot of the kitchen stairs he halted.

"Mamma! Mamma!" he cried.

"Hello, Lewikins!" she called from the upper hall.

"Mamma, can I have a little boy over to dinner with me?"

"No, Lewis, you can't. Go in the diningroom and sit down and I'll be right there." She passed the head of the stairs, glanced down, and stopped with a muffled exclamation when she saw the two faces peering up. "Why didn't you tell me your friend was there!" she snapped, "of course he can stay!" And she set her dustpan on the floor and hurried down.

"You children go in the diningroom and——" She stopped and eyed the boy. Clarence lowered his long lashes.

"What's your name, little boy?"

"Clarence Dacy, mum."

"You don't live around here, do you?"

"No, mum." His voice dropped to a whisper.

"He lives in the Village, Mamma," Lewis cried. "He's a poor boy and all he has to eat is bread and—just bread! Can't he eat dinner with me?"

"Why . . . yes. Why, of course he can, poor boy!" She started tying on her apron. "You two sit right here and I'll see what I can find."

Lewis finished his meal and leaned on his elbow, watching Clarence eat. Clarence's head was over his plate. His light curly hair fell low, but Lewis could see the eyes that never left the plate; the thin cheeks and jaw that moved around the masticating food; the throat that rose and fell with regularity. Clarence's hand stood poised, waiting, with a hunk of meat on the end of the fork. Then his mouth opened; the fork entered; and the lips closed noiselessly on it.

His friend with the beautiful white face and curly hair was hungry. Clarence never had anything to eat but bread and tea, but Lewis would feed him! He slid from his chair, and going around the table, he stood beside him. Clarence did not look up.

Suddenly Lewis leaned over and kissed him.

Clarence turned and stared. Lewis' cheeks grew hot, and his eyes

dropped under the other's gaze. When he looked up Clarence was eating again.

Clarence finished the last piece of cake and started picking the crumbs from the oilcloth. Then he glanced over his shoulder. Mrs. Raey was in the pantry.

"You think she'll give us some more cake?" he whispered.

"Mamma! Clarence wants some more cake!"

"No! Not me!" he snapped, glaring at Lewis.

"Well, he can't have any," Mrs. Raey called in. "He's eaten enough for a dozen boys! Run along out now, Lewikins, like a good boy and play!"

Later, when Clarence left, Lewis stole into the house and up the stairs to the attic. He entered the storeroom and shut the door gently behind him. Then he tiptoed between the lines of high trunks and crates until he reached his grandmother's trunk, beneath the low cobwebbed window.

It was old and dilapidated, pocked with torn stickers of a long-ago infancy, and when he opened its creaking lid the clean, suffocating odor of camphor filled the air. Lewis pulled out a scintillating black shawl, wrapped it around his body, and tossed one end over his left shoulder. Then, picking up a broken cane, he dropped to his hands and knees and started crawling in and out among the trunks.

"Come on, Clarence," he whispered, looking over his shoulder.

Between the high black rocks that rose about him, he silently made his way, followed by his lieutenant and the other soldiers. Finally he reached the side of the mountain, where he stopped and sat back on his haunches.

"Open, sesame!" he whispered.

The wall opened, revealing the dark cave beyond. Blocking the entrance was the mysterious oblong Box filled with deadly black water, the first terrible obstruction he must pass. The great iron ball floated on the top, dark and motionless, as it had floated there through all time; the slimy snakelike Thing still lifted its body above the water and coiled down again, out of sight; the queer rod still shot up at an angle, over the edge of the Box, its chain hanging from the end and losing itself in the blackness, waiting to coil

around the leg of the first Prince who dared venture across it, into the mysterious cave beyond.

Lewis clenched his sword tighter. He and Clarence and their men would cross the Pond of Darkness!

"Come on, Clarence!" he whispered; for now he decided he and Clarence would enter the cave, all by themselves.

Suddenly the dark rod came to life, slowly raising its head. A horrible groan came from the darkness, far below. The black water gurgled, gasped like a dying giant; and quickly, terribly, before his very eyes, it receded, carrying the great iron ball with it, revealing the curved snakelike Thing to its slimy base.

Lewis drew back and watched it with heart pounding and breath held tight. As the water slowly rose again, as the gasp changed to a hiss and then to a trickle, growing fainter and fainter, he reached out his hand to slide the door shut. For a moment he knelt there, holding his hand out, motionless. Then he jumped to his feet.

I'll leave it open, he thought, and then it'll be all ready when I bring Clarence up tomorrow! He tiptoed quickly to the trunk and jerked off the spangled shawl. When Clarence comes we'll cross the Box together, he told himself as he threw the shawl in the trunk and slammed the lid. Clarence was a lot nicer than Herbie! They'd go in the cave and play with his soldiers and have wonderful times together!

"We'll have some fun, won't we, Clarence!" he whispered aloud.

At recess next day Lewis ran out to the yard. Clarence was standing at the other end with a group of boys, one of whom was chalking a word in big wavering letters on the fence while the others watched the schoolroom windows. Lewis started running across the yard.

"Clarence!" he called. "Hi, Clarence!"

A boy saw him and spoke to Clarence. Clarence turned and looked at him; then he nudged the boy beside him and said something. One by one the others turned and looked at Lewis.

"Clarence!" Lewis shouted. He stumbled over a rock and fell sprawling, and when he picked himself up they were all in a row, watching him. The boy with the chalk had stopped writing, and he was watching, too.

"Hi, Clarence!" Lewis slowed down and stopped before the silent boys.

Clarence watched him, his hands in his pockets; but he did not speak. Lewis dropped his eyes and kicked at a stone. He stooped and picked it up and looked at it. Then he raised his eyes to Clarence's and smiled.

"Hey, Clarence . . ." he commenced.

Nobody spoke for a moment. Then Clarence said:

"What do you want?"

Lewis looked at the stone and giggled.

"Do you want to come over to my house this after?" he finally asked. "We'll play with my tin soldiers."

Somebody in the crowd snickered. Clarence looked at him a moment; then he spat through his teeth and commenced to laugh.

"Lewikins!" he sang. "Mamma's little Lewikins!"

"Lewikins!" called someone in the crowd.

Another boy walked behind him. Clarence stepped up and gave Lewis a shove, and he tumbled over the other boy's crouched body.

"Excuse me, Lewikins," said the boy, "today is Tuesday." The others all laughed.

Lewis rose to his feet as the boy ran away. He looked down, brushing off the seat of his trousers, while the laughter beat against his face and body. Then he straightened, and turned slowly away; he formed his lips as if he was whistling.

"Goodbye, Lewikins!"

Lewis sauntered toward the sidewalk.

"Wait a minute, fellows!" he heard Clarence whisper, and a moment later a stone hit him between the shoulderblades. As he reached the sidewalk a stone landed in the street before him.

"Goodbye, Lewikins!" He reached the Congregational Church and was hidden from view.

He trudged down the long hill that glared back at the mid-morning sun, looking straight ahead of him. Ever since he could remember he had walked down this hill in the bare sunlight of mid-morning, going home for recess; and every morning, half an hour later, he had walked back, returning to school. And I've got

to keep on doing that, he said to himself, every single day, till I'm a grown man. . . .

His mother was making bread when he entered the kitchen.

"Hello, Lewikins," she said. "You're awfully late."

"I stayed and——" He looked at his mother, and then dropped his eyes and flicked a crumb off the oilcloth. ". . . played with the kids," he finished.

"Well, here's a bowl of cornflakes. And keep an eye on the clock. You don't want to be late," she murmured; and she went in the pantry, closing the door behind her.

He ate his cornflakes and listened to the clock ticking off the seconds in the echoing silence of the kitchen. The sun lit the clean bare walls and threw a glaring patch of light on the new white oilcloth before him.

"Hurry up, Lewis! I don't want to have to write another note for you!"

"All right, Mamma." He finished his cornflakes, got up, and opened the pantry door. His mother leaned over and kissed him without removing her hands from the dough she was kneading.

"Mamma, how many days before school's over?" Lewis asked.

"Goodness, I don't know! Don't start worrying about school being over! It'll be over for good before you know it, and then you'll be settling down to a man's life and looking back and wishing you were in school again! You don't know a good thing when you see it!"

Lewis stared at his mother; then suddenly he doubled up with a loud groan.

"Oh, my, that was awful!" he said.

"What was awful, dear?" his mother asked without turning.

"I got a pain in my belly!"

"Lewis!"

"I got a pain in my belly, Mamma, it hurts something awful!" And he pressed his hands tight against his belly and swayed and groaned.

"Lewis!" she cried, swinging round. "Stop that nonsense and——"

"I got a pain in my——"

"*Stomach,* Lewis, I tell you!" she screamed. "And stand up straight and go back to school!"

He pressed his belly tighter and his groans loudened to a roar. The pain was becoming unbearable.

"It's awful, Mamma!" he cried. "It's awful! I *can't* go back! I can't even *move!*"

His mother turned to her kneeding with a little sigh.

"All right," she murmured. "You can stay home then."

The groans died away. Slowly, weakly, he straightened himself. He crossed the kitchen to the back steps. Upstairs were his tin soldiers, and "Alice In Wonderland," and his cozy little corner in the attic.

"Come on, Clarence," he whispered as he started up the stairs. "We'll have some fun!"

His grandmother seated herself between the window and the fireplace and took him on her lap.

"What'll our story be about, Lewis?" she demanded.

"About that awful place you went to!"

She stopped in the middle of blowing her nose and stared at him.

"Awful place?" she snapped. "What awful place? I never went to any awful place," she muttered, and finished blowing her nose.

"Yes, you did! you did, Grandma! You went to those awful woods, and right in the Center was that—that big Thing that has jewels and things all over it! You told me all about it! I remember it just as well!"

"Why, Lewis, you're crazy as a bat!" She glared at him a moment and then started cackling. "Why, you're mad as a hatter!" she cried.

"I am not either! You told me that story lots and lots of times! It starts in: In the Center of—of that Forest, there stands—that Thing!"

She shook her head sadly. Suddenly she stopped.

"I remember a couple of weeks ago starting to tell you about the obelisk that's in the center of the Forest of Fontainebleau. Is that it?"

"Yes, that's it! Only you always said: In the Center of the Forest of—of that place, there stands an Obe—you know!"

"Nonsense! I never told you about that place but once in my life!

You've got too good an imagination! . . . Well, now, sit still and listen . . . In the center of the Forest of Fontainebleau, there stands an obelisk, if you'll have it that way. And an obelisk isn't covered with jewels; it's just a high stone shaft, like what they have in Egypt. And the trees are cut away around it, leaving a big circle. And from that circle there are seven or eight roads, straight and wide; and they go away through the trees, as far as you can see."

"Where do they go to, Grandma?"

"Well, they have signposts at the head of them. And one says *Paris* on it, and another says *Perpignan,* which is miles away, on the border of Spain. And another goes to the southeast, and I suppose if you followed it long enough you'd get to Rome and Bagdad and the end of the earth."

"Did you go down that road, Grandma?"

"Land, no! I only started on the road to Orleans. We hired a wonderful old buggy and rode for a couple of days, staying at farmhouses on the way . . . And then we had a—a disagreement and—and gave it up. . ."

"Who'd you go with, Grandma?"

"A friend of mine."

"A lady or a man?"

She hesitated, and he felt her fingers tighten on his leg.

"It was a man," she snapped at last, "a very bad man . . . that is . . . he was a better man than the young things you see around nowadays!"

"Was it very long ago, Grandma?"

"Of course it was! A hundred years ago! Before you were born—before your mother was born! long, long before!"

"Well, where's that bad man now?"

"He wasn't a bad man, I tell you!" she cried, shaking him. ". . . and I don't know where he is. Probably dead of old age the way they all are but me." She stroked his head and drew him tighter. "He was an artist, Lewis," she said in a low voice, "and he went back to Barbizon, where people lived who really know how to paint and how to live . . . And I guess he found somebody there . . . who knew how to live. . . ."

There was a long silence, while she rocked back and forth, with Lewis in her lap.

"Leastwise I never saw him or heard of him again," she murmured.

"Well, Grandma!" He twisted around and looked up at her. "Didn't you ever go down any of the other roads?"

"Huh?" Her mouth was half open, showing her grinning false teeth, and she stared over his head.

Lewis turned back. The fire had richened to a glow that hurt his eyes, and its warmth seeped through his body. He slipped to the floor and sat looking at it.

"Lewis! Lewis!" His mother's voice rose from the kitchen. "Go around and see if the rain's coming in the windows! The wind's shifted!"

He looked up at the side window. The rain was shooting through the screen, wetting the sill and dripping to a puddle on the floor. He rose to close it.

But his grandmother had pulled herself to her feet. Her legs were stiff and she limped across the floor. She reached the window, and leaning over, she braced herself against the sill. And while the rain beat against her black hair and her white face, she stood, motionless, gazing out into the darkness.

That night as he put away the supper dishes, he decided to run away from home. He would go to the Center of the Forest of Fontainebleau, and then start on one of the roads that lead out of the Forest. He would take the one that leads to Bagdad and the End of the Earth.

Once in Bagdad, he walked around until he found the magic lamp. He rubbed it, and lo! a genii stood before him, clothed in smoke.

"What desireth the Lord of the Lamp?" he demanded, bowing low.

"Bring to me," commanded Lewis, "the Most Beautiful Princess in the World; build for us a palace, covered with diamonds and rubies and emeralds."

"Here's the garbage, Lewis," said his mother, handing him the pan. "It's stopped raining, I think."

He took the pan, passed through the black entry, and opened the rear door. Then he would leave Bagdad and walk on, until he reached the End of the Earth.

What was the End of the Earth like?

He stood in the darkness at the foot of the steps, the pan in his hand. The rain dripped: one drop from the roof of the porch; one drop from the tree over there; one drop from the tree beside him. The drip . . . drip . . . was measured in the silent world. It was the tick-tocking of Time, measuring Eternity.

A small black form rose before him . . . moved . . . and sank down before another black form just like itself. A sound rose, low and muffled; it came from a far-off Thing at the End of the Earth; but it rose from that black motionless form.

The sound died away and the figures did not move. They did not move . . . but now they were closer to each other.

It rose again, the sound of formless life in eternal silent night at the End of the Earth. And the black trees dripped . . . dripped . . . dripped——

Lewis turned and ran into the house. His mother was hanging dishcloths before the warm stove.

"For goodness sake, Lewis," she exclaimed, "what *are* you bringing the garbage back for?"

He slid the pan on the table and ran over and hugged her.

"Mamma!" he cried, "we're going to stay here always, aren't we?"

"So far as I know we are. What's the matter, dear?"

"And when we die, Heaven's light and nice, isn't it?"

"Lewis, you're the funniest child, I declare!" She leaned over and kissed him. "Leave the garbage there and I'll empty it in the morning. It *is* pretty wet out!"

But he hugged her closer. He had heard his old grandmother's rasping cough upstairs. *She* had been to that terrible Obelisk that was standing in the darkness, far, far away at the End of the World . . . standing in the bare round opening in the trees, waiting for him. But he would never go there! He would never leave his mother! no, never! never!

CHAPTER THREE

Lewis and Collins shoved their way into the front car of the subway train at Harvard Square and hurried along to the open end window. The train moved . . . gathered speed . . . roared through the tunnel, blowing the wintry wind against Lewis' face and making his eyes water. Two lines of tiny lights, hidden by hoods, stretched into the distance. They rushed toward the train, winked into view, and snapped out of sight. A *click* beneath the car, followed by a steely flash.

The train was rushing toward a city, toward lights, noise, people walking through darkened streets, toward the burlesque show at the Old Howard. What would Miss Howard say if she knew they were going to the Old Howard?

He laughed aloud, and then glanced quickly from the corner of his eye at his new friend.

"What would Miss—what would old Howard say if she knew we was going to the Old Howard?" he shouted above the roar of the train.

Collins grinned and turned his watering eyes back to the open window.

"Not that I give a damn!" Lewis added quickly. That's the third time I've spoken of teachers, he thought, and he kicked viciously at the door. Not that I give a damn; and he raised his eyes toward the city.

Toward the city of mystery and the dimness and terror of passion; and he was rushing toward it, flying through the tunnel toward it; leaving the uniform pleasures of his own people in the suburbs, and speeding underground to a strange world!

The train roared through the hard brown tunnel, past metallic winking lights; till, as through the small end of a telescope, he saw the lively blue night rising above the hazy lamps on the bridge. The hole grew . . . and at last the train, grating, roaring, lifted itself out of the tunnel, and mounted, humming, up the bridge.

Blackness on either side, blocked off by lines of tiny lights that were doubled in the water; dotting the Esplanade before him; the Cambridge road behind; and the bridges over the black water.

Above the Esplanade the buildings rising on the hill were the color of jet, speckled with yellow; and an incense of purple-and-red rose above them, thinning and dissolving in the starcluttered sky. Signal lights lined the path, and as the train climbed to meet them, the ruby snapped to amber and the amber to emerald, while their colors trickled along the sleek rails.

Lewis swung around to Collins.

"Jeez, I like this, don't you?" he shouted, "the lights and all that, and the crowds and things in the city!"

"Hell, I wouldn't take all the cities in the world if you gave them to me," replied Collins. "Me for the country!" He spat through the open window and the two boys wiped their faces in silence.

"I like woods too," said Lewis; but just then the faerielit tunnel lifted its head, and the train, humming nasally, glided down and rushed in with its old harsh roar. Park Street Under, cut and lit like a stage setting. The train slowed and stopped.

"I like woods too, don't you?" Lewis shouted as he rushed up the escalator behind Collins, his overcoat flying behind him.

"Yep," Collins called back.

"Hell, I don't mean trees and pretty flowers," Lewis gasped as he caught up with Collins and they started along the darker end of Tremont Street. "I just like—I don't know . . ." They hurried on in silence, their overcoats flapping in the breeze. Hell, I hate flowers and that junk, Lewis said to himself.

"They're going to cut down the trees in the Cedars and build houselots."

"Gee, no!" Lewis swung around.

"Yeh. Isn't that a hell of a note?" Collins turned toward Lewis, his brow puckered. "Goddamn it, but I like woods!"

"Gee, so do I! You can get away from people and—aw, gee! that's a hell of a note!"

"And they're going, one right after another. There won't be any more woods at all after a hundred years!"

"It's getting pretty bad," murmured Lewis, staring at the dark ancient pillars of King's Chapel that rose above the phantom gravestones, dim yellow in the light of a lonely street lamp. "Look at this

country!" he suddenly shouted, "only—let's see—about three hundred years old, and it's getting overcrowded!"

"It's not as bad as Europe. There isn't any room left there, and so they all come over here and fill up our country." Collins blew his nose, regarding Lewis seriously over the top of his handkerchief. "You know," he said, gazing at his handkerchief and then sticking it in his pocket, "you know, there's a lot of people think that's why they're having this war over there. Germany and France and Russia and those countries have got too many men and they have to kill them off now and then."

Lewis stared at Collins.

"Gee," he murmured, "that's a hell of a note!"

"Isn't it? Isn't that a hell of a way to run things?" Collins chuckled.

"I'll tell the world!" The world is overcrowded; in London, Paris, in the cities of India. They are crowded in their houseboats along the rivers of China. They are crowding ahead of him in lighted, noisy Scollay Square! Black forms move in and out, their heads tinged with yellow-on-black; and above them hangs a mist that is purple like the facepowder of negresses. He could see thin gray streams of exhaled breath rising into the mist, along with the blue smoke of tobacco that curled up and spread and was lost. Higher, the air cleared and shimmered with the light of flashing signs from movie theaters and candy parlors, while in its flicker the white arc lamps burned, round and steady. And above all the night spread its clear, farflung blue, adulterated with the purple dust of the city.

But down here in our little crowded world, there are too many people and they must be killed; so they march to war with beating drums.

boom . . . throb . . . . . *boom* . . . throb . . .

People! crowding under flashing lights, under the lightreflected buildings, swinging their bodies, crossing, passing

boom . . . throb . . . . . *boom* . . . throb . . .

They crowd in bazaars in Damascus and Bagdad where men sit crosslegged, beating their tomtoms:

boom—throb . . . *boom*—throb . . . *boom*—throb . . . *boom*

Along the streets of Algiers and Cairo . . . . . and out of the city, out in the desert, they beat tomtoms to the night of the stars:

boom—throb . . . *boom*—throb . . . *boom*—throb . . . *boom*

"I'd like to go to Egypt, wouldn't you? Boy!"

"Uh-huh." Collins was walking out of time, and his shoulder bumped against Lewis'.

Lewis threw back his head and rounded the bend.

Nearer, throbbing; booming, throbbing

BOOM—throb! BOOM—throb! BOOM—throb! BOOM—throb!

Louder—LOUDER—

they enter the square.

GLO—RY TO JE—SUS! GLO—RY TO GOD!

BOOM! BOM! BOOM! BOM! BOOM! BOM! BOOM!

On Court Street, that climbs the dark lonely hill, Salvation Army women stood, shivering, watching the crowd pass below. And while they watched, they sang their hymn with voices, tragic, hard; as dogs howl in the distance, howl to the moon:

. . *GLO—RY TO JE—SUS! GLO—RY TO GOD!*

Silent, above, against the bare hill, stood a huge buck negro, his hat in his hand. And nearby the drummer beat on his drum:

BOOM! BOM! BOOM! BOM! BOOM! BOM! BOOM!

"Let's stop and hear them."

"No, let's go on."

And Lewis, keeping his swinging stride, crossed to the sidewalk and steered through the crowd. Italians, Irish, shouting newsboys, panhandlers, gorgeous Jewesses, filing, filing, past the lighted windows. In the dark and silent center of the square, more black forms poured from the mouth of the big black subway station, crossed to the sidewalk and were lost in the pageant.

"But don't you think," Lewis looked down at the sidewalk and kicked at it. "Don't you think they'll find some way—some way beside killing people off, I mean?"

"Huh?" Collins stared at him as they walked along. "Oh, sure! They'll find some way we never thought about."

"They might find—take, for instance——" Lewis was gazing across the square where wide Hanover Street unrolled below them

with splashes of color and even dots of white, until, way down in the North End, dead black forms moved in a ruddy darkness. "Well, look," he said, "supposing—of course this is just an example, but—well, they might find a way to get to the moon or some crazy place like that—millions of years from now . . . if the world gets too overcrowded." He turned to Collins. "Of course that's a crazy idea, but—"

"Hell, yes! why not?" Collins' eyes were watering as he returned Lewis' gaze. "Christ, they've done bigger things than that!"

Lewis laughed and he felt his own eyes water.

"It sounds crazy," he cried, "but jeez! so did the aeroplane! Look how people laughed at that! And I suppose they'd laugh at us now, just the same way!"

"Yeh. They always do."

"The damn fools . . ." They laugh at everything, or else they'd want to kill him for saying a thing like that could be done, like the Pope killed that Italian for saying the world was round, and then another Italian *proved* it was round, and Dante was an Italian and all the people who write good music, and Cæsar was really one and yet they call them all a bunch of ignorant Wops, like that girl flashing black eyes as she passes, her ankles are too thick, they'd call her a dirty Kike; and yet there are lots of fine Jews in this country and Gladstone was a Jew and a prohibitionist, too! and look at the Bible, they were all Jews and they were so good some of them lived to be a thousand years old; Methuselah, Moses, Abraham—Jesus Christ, the ageless, the Son of God, was a Jew!

"How old are you?" asked the beautiful lady.

"Twenty-five," answered the Jew.

"Twenty-five? You look nearer fifty!"

"Vell, you see I ought by rights to be two years older, but my vater vas such a shy young man!"

The two boys made their way down the aisle of the orchestra, which was dark, save for splashes of fleshred where lights from the stage played on the rows of upturned faces. Thin streams of blue smoke rose from the fleshred faces and thickened as they rose, and the ceiling dissolved in a limitless gray cloud. They took their seats between a dozing sailor and a well-dressed businessman who

glanced at them from the corner of his eye. Lewis lit a cigarette, stretched his legs far out, and looked at the stage through the smoke that curled up and beyond his eyes.

"Give me a dollar!" demanded the Jew.

"I look cuckoo, don't I!" answered the lady.

But the Jew crept up and stuck his nose in her face.

"Gimme a dollar!" he hissed.

"Gwan! you look about as dangerous as a missionary at supper-time in the Hoochy Koochy Islands!"

He whipped out a revolver and covered her.

"Vun dollar, quick! right away!" He shot the revolver and she opened her purse. "Going, going, gone!" he cried, and he snatched it from her hand.

"Gimme dat dress!" he yelled, "it looks goot to me!"

Bang! went the revolver and off came her dress.

"Gimme dat silk shimmy, shimmy, shimmy! Oy, oy, oy! it looks goot to me!"

Bang! went the revolver! up came the chemise! He circled round and looked her up and down.

"Someting else, kiddo, looks goot to me! Get out o' dem tights, lady! take 'em off, quick!" And he cut up a caper.

Click! the revolver was empty.

"T' hell mit an armistice!"

He threw it away—the lady fled—the lights went out . . . and on, and

"Take your little baby for an auto ride!

Close up all the curtains while I creep inside!

Take me to your busom and just give me a squeeze!

Ooo—*Wump!*"

(Watch her tum cave in!)

"Ooo—*Wump!*"

(See that trance-like grin!)

"Oh! oh! *do it all over, dear!* . . ."

She sidled across the stage, body rocking, arms rocking. Behind her stood the chorus, shouting and shimmying.

"Lamp me nice and fatherly beneath them lids!

Then you can be the father to a million of kids!

This baby goes to the highest what bids!
UP! shoot her up again!
Higher! shoot her up again!
OoooOOOMP!
That's the autoist's rag!" . . .

The *beat! . . . beat! . . .* of Oriental music, soft and seductive. Across the black stage moved a scarlet light; and the music, *beating . . . beating . . .* lifted itself to the light as it moved along; lifted itself; dropped; lifted itself higher; higher! . . . and dropped back into the depths of its *beat! . . . beat! . . .* again.

She was black and dead white, and her belly was naked with black bands above and beneath it, and the bellybutton showed in the center. With pointed movements, the tip of her toes touching the throb of the drum, she moved across the stage into the scarlet light. She lifted herself up . . . and the light turned to white, showing her dead white face and her dead white belly and her long, slow moving arms.

Slowly she writhed; slowly she strove to free herself from the music that coiled about her above the throbbing of the drums. Then she stood still and her belly wiggled.

It sank way in and curled and rounded itself out like a basket of snakes. Her head thrown back: her arms outstretched: her legs apart and planted firmly: her breasts rising and falling in sympathy:—her belly writhed in agony beneath the smooth white skin. And the drum *beat! . . . beat! . . .* striking against the dull, sensual music. . . .

Beating . . . beating . . . his heart beat in time with the wheels of the chilly street-car, in time with the dull beat in his memory; his insides writhed as he thought of that smooth, writhing belly.

"I'm not going to any more burlesque shows," Collins muttered suddenly, his voice muffled in his upturned collar.

Lewis shivered and huddled deeper into his overcoat.

"They're pretty stinking, aren't they?" he agreed. "Gee, those fat greasy women—when you think of the girls we know back at school!" Catherine Shipman, clean, slender—no wonder she wouldn't look at him! She wanted a clean fellow, an athlete—but he'd show them! he'd go out for the team next spring, he'd be

cleanbodied, clean thinking, like a Greek athlete, he'd keep straight! "I think a fellow ought to keep straight," he said, "just the same as a girl, don't you? Tailing's just as bad, no matter who does it, don't you think?"

But Collins did not answer. His eyes were closed, and his head had sunk into the bundle of his overcoat. Lewis glanced at the shapeless inert form and then turned quickly to look out the window.

Before him, shining in the arc lamps, was the narrowed, winding river, frozen blue up here, its edges flecked with ice that was frothy and stiff like the beaten white of an egg. He could see the mass of icy bushes, glittering black on the Brighton bank beyond; and farther off rose the dark Stadium, cut sharply against the lively blue sky above the city. The Coliseum at Rome is like that . . . and right now, in the balmy evening of Naples, lazy boats are drifting beneath the towering darkness of Vesuvius.

In the center of the Forest of Fontainebleau, there stands an obelisk.

He shivered ecstatically. When school finished for the season, clean, and hardened by his spring of athletics, he would put a pack on his back and hop a freighter for France. And there, in the middle of a cool dark forest where the soft green moss sparkles red and diamond with the stirring of the leaves overhead, he would strike out, down the road leading to the southeast, to Lyon, Marseilles and Rome . . . "to Bagdad and the end of the earth," he whispered with a smile.

He sat in the stillness of the darkening livingroom, leaning far back in the morrischair, listening to the shrill sounds of spring beyond the open window. They shrilled on and on, forever boring into his heart. They were the voices of life; and they pointed to death.

Death is inevitable. One day it will come into his room, noiselessly, with the slowness and certainty of the falling of night. It will lay its black cloak over him, and his head will fall back, never to rise again.

He jumped up . . . and sank back. It isn't here yet; but it will come! it will come!

He listened to the *creak* . . . *creak* of the rockers on the piazza below the window; his mother's voice, soft and scarcely audible; his father's, a deep rumble; and Lillian's, riding above them, clear and liquid.

There is no escape from life. The roads at Fontainebleau stretch through the twilight, just as Adams Street and Winthrop Avenue stretch away from the house. If he got there, there would be nothing to protect him, to hide him from the truth of life. There would simply be roads, leading to more roads; there would simply be the future, which is another present, waiting for another future . . . like now.

Supposing he became successful; made a million dollars; what then? What good would traveling do, just to see things? What good would anything do? Eating was the only real thing, and God! was eating his only reason for being here?

He jumped up again and crossed to the window, and he looked out at the western horizon, cut in black and white; at the horizon to the east, where the trees were still visible against the hillside, and above which the smoke of darkness was beginning to discolor the sky. The world is so open and cold, so unsympathetic! What does it care about an atom like him? Nothing would help him; nothing would stop death; nothing.

Out of the billions of years of life, out of the thousands of years of civilization, only seventy are real—his own years. The ages gone by, when Cæsar and Napoleon and Lincoln lived, are only a musty picture to glance at occasionally; the eons to come are but a second's thought. *This* time, only, is real! The noise he makes with his mouth, the things he sees, his thoughts, are all that is real; and they are only a moment in eternity!

Before long, the flesh on the finger he is wiggling in front of his nose, its pink and white, its delicate wrinkles, it'll all be eaten away. The bone underneath it will appear; then that will crumble; and it will be nothing. Then, generations to come, his feelings and loves will be nothing, save, perhaps, an idle wonder in a living person's brain. What is he living for?

Time is a stage. It is black, chaotic. Along it the ages rumble, invisible. *A white flash!* OBJECTS STAND OUT IN ITS GLARING LIGHT—the flash is gone; and the ages rumble on through the darkness. Why should he drag through life, and then die—for nothing?

He glanced up. The sky was like watered ink. One pure star winked down at him.

The people were going into their houses now, driven by the chill of the evening, and the dark street was dotted with irregular squares of yellow. In the west, above the houses, the sky was faerie blue, and one liquid star shone above a firtree that was outlined against the horizon. But in the east, between the lacelike branches of two willow trees still shining in the western light, he saw an orange moon, hung against a curtain of sheer deep purple.

O, Lola, bianco come fiore di spino . . . .

The soft notes of the violin came through a window up the street and moved drowsily through the secretstirring young leaves, and the moon listened as it mounted the sky. It has heard many beautiful things as it circles the earth through all time, nightbirds in the jungle, songs on Venetian canals, the roaring of waterfalls, the whispers of lovers in ancient Greece; if he called up Kit she'd go to the movies with him!

He whirled around and hurried across the darkened room to the telephone.

"She'll go with me, I bet she will," he muttered as he feverishly felt and kicked his way through the darkness. "I'll take her hand in the theater and lean down and kiss it when it's dark, I'll tell her how I would have gone out for the ballteam if—if—only I couldn't, but it's not too late to go out now!" He flung up his hand, struck the phone and sent it tumbling to the floor. "March ain't too late to go out!" he thought as he stooped for it.

"What happened up there?" His mother's voice rose from the piazza. Lewis placed the phone close to his mouth.

"Belerton, 8794," he said in a low voice.

His heart thumped as he heard the buzz of the ringing bell at the other end.

"Lewis!"

The receiver came off. "Hello."

"Hello. Is this Belerton 8794?"

"Yes."

"Is Catherine there?"

"This is Catherine. Who is this, please?"

"Lewis!"

"Can't you guess?"

"No, I can't guess."

He wet his lips, listening to his thumping heart, listening for the voice from below, picturing the face of the girl at the other end of the line.

"Try," he said. His voice suddenly broke and he giggled.

"No. I couldn't guess in a million years. Who is it, please? I'm in an awful hurry!"

"This is Lewis Raey."

"Lewis Raey! Where are you?"

"Oh, hello, Lewis Raey! How are you?"

"Fine, thanks." There was the scrape of a chair below; the rocking stopped. "Say, Kit, I was wondering, want to go to the movies tonight?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, Lewis! I'd like to, but I'm going to a dance in Watingmont with Herb Mackaye."

"Oh . . . are you?"

"Yes, I'm awfully sorry."

"Yes, you are!"

"Of course I am, Lewis! Do you think I'd say I am if I'm not?"

"Oh, no!"

"Well, I should say not! My mother didn't bring me up that way!"

". . . Well . . . I bet you're sorry."

"Of course I am, Lewis!"

". . . Well—do you want to go next Saturday afternoon?"

"That's rather far ahead, isn't it—why, besides, Lewis, that's the day of the Arltown game! have you forgotten that? Herb would be awful sore if I didn't show up to root, and so would all the boys!"

"Oh, yeh; I forgot that." He cleared his throat. "I'm going out—" Suddenly, in the darkness of the hall, he saw his mother's great eyes

watching him. "I'm going out for the team," he said, forcing his voice out of the heavy listlessness of his body. "I guess."

"Are you? That's fine, Lewis! Well, call me up some other time and if I can I'd love to go with you!"

"All right."

"Will you, Lewis?"

"Yeh."

"Thanks awfully for asking me!"

"All right."

". . . Well . . . goodbye!"

"Goodbye."

His mother stepped into the room as he dropped the receiver in place.

"What happened, Lewis?" she asked as she felt her way to the windows and started shutting them. "Brr! It's coming up chilly!"

"I knocked the telephone over." He dropped back into his old seat.

"You didn't answer, so I thought you might be hurt. Did it hurt the telephone?" she asked, sinking into the rocker across the table from him.

"Well, it talks, dont it?" In the darkness he stared out the window at the black horizon of roofs and chimneys and waited for her answer; but she sat in silence, moving gently back and forth in her rocker. The radiator *clink . . . clinked* as his father worked on the furnace below; he heard his sister go in her room and shut the door. "I was talking to Kit Shipman, Ma," he said.

Still staring ahead of him, he could hear her turn to look at him.

"Catherine Shipman? What did she have to say?"

"Nothing . . . Ma."

"She's an awfully pretty girl, isn't she, Lewis!"

"I don't know. . . . I guess so, Ma."

"Did I hear you say you were going to join the baseball team?"

"I don't know, M—I can't *join* it till I *make* it, can I?" he snapped.

"I don't know, dear," she replied, gently. "I don't know much

about those things, you know . . ." She continued rocking in silence.

Lewis could hear the *creak . . . creak,* as she rocked back and forth. Staring out the window, he thought of her white hair, her soft white face, her great eyes staring out the same window. On a faraway hill above the black line of roofs and chimneys, rose a great tree, its high naked branches etched against the lively moonlit sky. Everything was faraway; except that black room around him, and her, and the window before them both.

Her soft voice broke the silence.

". . . It's nice to sit here alone together in the dark, isn't it . . . just thinking . . ."

"Yes, Ma." Lewis leaned over and jerked on the light. "I got a lot of studying to do, Ma," he said.

"Of course, dear. I didn't think . . ." She reached for the newspaper as she heard her husband coming up the stairs.

Wordsworth—1770 to 1850.

Coleridge—1772 to 1834.

Southey—1774 to . . . to . . .

His mind was dull, and the effort cut into his numbness like a knife. But he must learn these dates! there were so many! *1771, 1832, 1788, 1792, 1795, 1821*—he was so far behind! and his French hadn't been studied! nothing! nothing . . . nothing. . . .

The newspapers behind him rustled. His father moved heavily and cleared his throat as if about to speak. Lewis waited, a date standing balanced in his mind. He waited . . . but his father did not speak.

The date dissolved . . . numbness . . . a sharp pain stabbed his brain, tensioned his nerves. He stared before him, clenching his book.

His mother turned a page. It was as if his family whirled around to stare at him.

"They liberated Mrs. Chamberlain, I see."

"What did they do to that fellow who was with her?"

"They gave him five years."

"Humph! they ought to both get life!"

. . . A black windowpane, splotched with electric light, watched

him silently and closed him in. Nearby, the radiator whispered. A blackness suffused him, suffocated him.

He hunched himself in his chair, the book in his lap. There were so many dates!

Wordsworth—1770 to 1850.

Coleridge—1772 to 1834.

GOD! He jumped up and started for the door.

"Oh, Lewis."

"What?"

His father folded over his newspaper and laid his cigar in the tray. Lewis waited, trembling, itching, clutching the door. Mr. Raey pulled himself around to face him.

"I want you to fix up the garden. Your mother'd like a few flowers this year."

"All right, Pa."

"When will you do it?"

"Tomorrow, after school."

"Sure, now?"

"Yeh."

He ran up the stairs and into his room, shutting the door gently. He switched on the light.

The room was empty. A black windowpane, splotched with reflected light, watched him silently and closed him in. Nearby the radiator whispered.

He dropped into his armchair and leaned back, relaxed, gazing at the ceiling. A humming, a thickness in the atmosphere, closed down upon him, holding him in his chair. He jumped up, walked around the room, and then threw himself on the bed.

Life is a thing that is purposeless, foolish. It goes round and round and round. It creates and destroys; creates and destroys. What is the sense in accomplishment? you only accomplish—death. You struggle and struggle and die. . . .

What *is* there to live for? School? to learn—what? to live a little better before death comes. Mother? work of any sort? what's it all for? Nobody ever got to the top. The top is death. Even if Kit *did* love him—she would grow old and ugly like her mother; sharp-

featured, looseskinned, with a voice like breaking crockery. Her body would be looseskinned, too.

His eyes pressed tight over his forearm, and little lights, green and yellow, quivered into existence and vanished. Circles, formed from dots, grew, slowly, steadily, and passed beyond his vision, around the corner of his brain. Others came. He lifted his face and found the yellow wall pressing against his nose. The vivid lights of his brain danced upon it, and when he shifted his eyes, they shifted. Over his head the light burned, steady and quiet. It seemed to hum.

In the world there is nothing to live for. One gets up, one goes to bed again; one eats, gets hungry again; one works and one dies. Life is a black empty plain, along which he must drag himself, toward death. And he was alone in life. Nobody would help him; nobody cared—save those who irritated him and got in his way. . . .

This blackness would seep in, close in on him, choke him. . . .

But he would kill himself first! that would be easy! Whenever it became unbearable—*bang!* it was all finished!

He turned over, lying with his arms outstretched, staring at the ceiling. All he had to do was pull the trigger; or turn on the gas. . . .

The gas flowed into the room, softly and soundlessly. He breathed it in, deep, deep. . . . The ceiling would be the cover of his coffin . . . deep, deep . . . the electric light would burn on, hot and dazzling, although there would be no one there to see it . . . deep, deep—

He jumped up and ran to the gas jet and examined it. Then he sat down in a hard seat, rocking and breathing with relief.

There is God. God would protect him, watch over him, save him. Lewis slowly unlaced his shoe and pulled it off. God watches over one, is a very present help in trouble. . . . He turned out the light and jumped into bed.

God is a great Thing, sitting astride the earth, His head in the stars. . . . Of course there is a God . . . but Who made God?

Is there a greater Being, more aged, more awful, higher up in the Universe, above the stars, to Whom God must account for His

actions? And still further back, is there Another Who made God's God? And Another . . . and Another . . . and Another. . . .

He saw God through the ceiling, looking down at him, covering the whole sky. And a greater God was behind Him, and Another behind Him, covering the Universe, reaching back into Eternity. He counted Them, slowly: One . . . Two . . . . . Three . . . . . Four—

Lewis stifled a whimper and turning on his side, he pulled his legs up and dug his nose in his knees.

God. Great God. . . . And yet, God's God. . . .

His mother was in a coffin, being carried away by his father, his terrible, repulsive, fishyeyed father. God leaned over his bed.

"Lewis," He whispered.

His eyes were lights, with black dots that gazed into Lewis'. His nose was huge and hooked and wrinkled.

He bent closer.

"Lewis." His whisper was hoarse.

Lewis struggled, but he could not move. God's face descended, a Head suspended from the ceiling. He had no beard, but everything beneath His nose was eaten away. In its place was a mass of web that went through, soft and thick, to the back of His brain. If it touched one's face, it would catch and tear dryly. Dead flies hung there. Trapped worms contracted and loosened. Spiders crawled about and disappeared in the white mass.

"Lewis!"

Lewis was in a coffin now and could not move.

"Lewis!" The Head descended, covered him, almost touched him.

A shriek.

Lewis heard it like a voice from the past. He was sitting up, choking for air. He tumbled out of bed and clawed the darkness, searching for the light. When he switched it on, he looked around.

There was the same black windowpane, open now, a silent sentinel. The radiator was quiet, but it stood there, safe and immobile.

He pulled a blanket from the bed and wrapped himself in it. Then he dropped into an icy chair, and took his English book from the table. He turned its cold leaves.

To understand the life of him, who, in Tennyson's words,

"uttered nothing base," it is well to read first, Wordsworth's "The Prelude," and then I'm going to read Shakespeare and Milton and all those bastards! "Every single evening, starting tomorrow," he whispered aloud. "I'll be learning something and having a good time, both at once!"

And shivering with cold and ecstasy, he chucked the book on the table and hopped back into bed.

"Why, how *do* you do, Lewis Raey! Come right in!" Mrs. Freeland smiled, showing even, hard teeth. She scrutinized him behind her pincenez. "It's years since I've seen you! And how is your mother?"

Lewis smiled and looked down at the hat in his hand.

"She's pretty well, thank you."

"I haven't seen her for so long!—I'm afraid to say how long—I'm no good at calling, as you probably know! Wonderfully balmy evening for September, isn't it—do put your hat anywhere you can find room!" With a graceful sweep of her hand she indicated the hats and caps strewn the length of the divan. "Marie is in the livingroom with the other children—Children! You're hardly children any longer, are you! Marie would be quite insulted if she heard that!" Mrs. Freeland laughed and Lewis laughed with her and edged toward the livingroom door.

"Why, Lewis Raey, how you've grown! And you've got on long trousers, too! How long have you worn them?"

"Over a year now, I guess."

"No! Really? Why, you must be about—er—fourteen years old?"

"Sixteen in May."

"Sixteen? Now just think of that! You children are growing older every day!" She laughed and nodded and Lewis laughed, swung around, bumped into the door, and went in the livingroom.

The legato notes of a slow waltz coming from the large Victrola greeted him as he entered. They surged over the long room, creeping into the arms and legs of the seven or eight dancing couples, who spun slowly around as if each pair stood on the slowmoving disc of an oldfashioned musicbox. Now and then a boy and girl broke loose from the spell; ran a few steps on their toes . . . and dropped

back in the sluggish swirling movement. Two older boys and a few chosen younger ones stood opposite him near the sunparlor. They leaned against the wall and doorposts, hands in their pockets, silent, following the dancers with sober shifting eyes.

Lewis waved to Marie Freeland who was dancing, and then strolled across to the sunparlor. The group of boys, shifting their eyes to him, presented an impassable barrier; but when he reached them they gave way, silently, and he passed through. Herbert Mackaye and Collins were before him, leaning against the latticed glass wall and smoking cigarettes. Mackaye looked up and regarded Lewis with unsmiling eyes.

"Hi," said Lewis.

"Hello, there." Collins nodded gravely and looked down to flick his ashes. Mackaye did not speak.

"Got a pill?" asked Lewis.

Collins shook his head.

"Last one," he said.

Lewis turned to Mackaye. Mackaye stared at him a moment; then slowly reached in his pocket, drew out a package, and, his eyes always on Lewis, silently passed it. Lewis took one.

"Thanks," he said, and he lit the cigarette and leaned against the wall beside Mackaye, smoking with long quick puffs. There was a moment's silence, while the three gazed ahead of them, smoking. Then Mackaye spoke.

"We got some good men back of the line," he said in his low husky voice, "but the line's lousy. We got to get a couple of good ends or we'll throw every game this year."

"Why don't you take on Raey here?" Collins leaned forward and smiled, half-friendly, at Lewis. Lewis looked quickly at Mackaye.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "Having trouble with the new line?"

Mackaye twisted around to spit into the potted palm, almost knocking his head against Lewis'. He turned back.

"Larry'd be all right," he went on to Collins, "but he runs like he's crippled. . . ." But Lewis didn't run like a cripple. Swift as a

deer he swooped down on the ball, just as Mackaye was grabbing for it.

"Let me get it, goddamn you!" grunted Mackaye.

But Lewis did not answer him. The ball under his arm, he started down the field.

"Go it, Lewis," he heard Kit cry. "Lewis! Lewis!"

He pushed himself away from the wall with a suddenness that rattled the glass panes. "Guess I'll go in and dance a while," he muttered.

Mackaye stopped talking and Lewis knew he was staring at his back. Mackaye knew he was going to ask Kit to dance; but what the hell harm is there in that, all the other fellows were dancing with her and besides what business was it of Mackaye's, what the hell did he care, he'd just tear down that field, the ball under his arm, crashing through interference—

"Excuse me . . . can I get by?"

The four boys blocking the doorway turned to look at him; stared a moment in silence; then pushed lazily back.

"Let Mrs. Raey's little boy get by," Fisher sang softly, and when Lewis looked up, he winked down in a friendly fashion.

—right through to a clear field, and then down the line for the goal posts; and after the touchdown he sat on the ball, his legs outstretched, jiggling round, laughing in a carefree manner at his yelling teammates who were rushing down to carry him on their shoulders, laughing at the mad cheering crowd. He saw her suddenly, looking at him beyond a group of people; she's moving away, he thought, because she knows I'm going to ask her to dance.

He caught her eye, however, and she stopped and her face lit up in a friendly smile.

"Come on and dance with me, Lewis Raey!" she cried, slipping through the group. "I haven't danced with you in a million years!"

As they slowly revolved in time with the soft slurring music, he felt her hair tickle his eye and temple and run smooth and full against his cheek. When he pressed his cheek closer, it gave, silkily. He turned his head slowly, brushing his lips against her hair.

She was smiling to somebody over his shoulder, a suppressed flick-

ering smile, and when they swung around he saw Mackaye standing in the sunparlor doorway with the others.

For a second his hard eyes met Lewis'. Then he said something out of the corner of his mouth and the boys around him laughed.

"Hah? What's that?" somebody back in the sunparlor asked in a loud whisper.

A moment's wait. . . . Then he heard a laugh echo in the emptiness of the other room.

Lewis' feet got mixed up. His muscles tightened, and Catherine dug her fingers into his arm.

"There!" she said when he relaxed, "that's better! Now every time you do that, I'm going to pinch you!"

"Gee, I'm a rotten dancer!"

"You are not! You're marvelous! Only I wish they'd play a fox-trot! I hate these dead dances, don't you?"

"Yes . . ." He felt her breath against his ear, and the word came in a whisper.

"Let's sit out the rest then!" she cried, stopping suddenly. "I think that'd be more fun," she added, smiling confidentially into his eyes, "don't you?"

But a pain had tightened his stomach, tensioned his whole body. They were standing by the hall door.

"Come on out on the hall stairs," he said, clearing his throat, "Come on!" he repeated, grabbing her arm as she drew back, "just on the steps," he whispered, "just for a second!"

He led her down the empty hall and half way up the broad stairs. He seated himself on the step below, close to her, holding his body tight, watching her as she leaned forward and gazed solemnly at nothing, watching her hazel eyes, her delicate nostrils, the smooth sweep of her chin and throat. Suddenly he reached up and put his arm about her.

Catherine pushed him away.

"Don't, Lewis!" she said.

He cleared his throat.

"Why . . ."

"It isn't being done this season," she murmured, staring down the hall. Suddenly she broke into a smile. "Look, Lewis!" she cried,

pointing to the long pierglass near the front door. "Look in there and you can see them dancing in the other room!"

He turned his head. His hand slipped from her arm and dropped limply to her knee.

"Look!" she laughed. "Look at Johnny down there! See! isn't he just too funny for anything?"

He moved his hand higher, staring at the rug below.

"I think . . ." He cleared his throat, "he's a . . . poor nut . . ."

"Oh, Johnny's a peach! I'm just crazy about him!"

Lewis said nothing. His eyes were on the floor; but his hand crept further . . . further . . . stopped. His heart *thumped, thumped;* he wanted to laugh. He pressed his fingers . . . relaxed; every muscle tense; controlling a trembling . . . slowly . . . slowly—

"Oh, Lewis! who do you suppose asked me to go to the dance next Saturday?"

Lewis looked up. His eyes were wet when they met hers. But Catherine laughed as she thought of the invitation. "It was Lester O'Connor!" she said.

His hand slipped, striking against the step.

"Are you going . . ." he whispered.

"With him?" Catherine laughed. "Wouldn't I look funny going to a dance with Conny!"

He stared at his hand, lying limp on the step.

"What's the matter with him?" he murmured. "He's a pretty goodlooking fellow, isn't he?"

"Why—" She pondered. "Yes, he's a rather goodlooking kid—And he's a peach of a dancer! He cut in on Mack one time, and he's a wonderful dancer!"

"Well," muttered Lewis, "why don't you want to go with him then, instead of—well, with him . . ."

"Why, Lewis! Wouldn't I look nice, rattling up to the townhall in that tinpan flivver of his!"

"You could go in your own car, couldn't you?"

"Of course I couldn't! You're crazy! Besides, nobody ever goes with him, except that Irish crowd—and anyhow, I told Mack I'd go with him a long time ago. He's a peach of a dancer!"

"A lot better than me, I guess," murmured Lewis. "I can't dance at all!"

"Whaat . . ." She was smiling at the reflection of the dancers that flitted across the mirror. But now she swung around. "Why, Lewis! how many times have I got to tell you? You're just a *wonderful* dancer! You're a little scarcrow, that's what you are!" she said, bobbing her head severely at him. "You've got to learn to be more sure of yourself!" She turned back to the mirror and broke into a smile. "Look!" she whispered, "there's old Johnny, dancing around by himself again!"

". . . Hey, Kit!"

Without looking down from the mirror. "Hey, what?"

"How do you want a fellow to be? I mean, what kind of a fellow do you like?"

"I don't know. I like any fellow who's a good fellow."

"Do you think a fellow ought to be an athlete?"

"I like him to be one, though he's got to be a lot more than that to suit me now." She turned toward him. "When I was a crazy little kid I used to think a fellow'd have to be a football hero before I'd look at him, but now I like a fellow to be a good dancer."

"Gee . . . that lets me out."

The music had stopped in the livingroom. They could hear the clatter of plates and the tinkle of glasses. Catherine stood up.

"Oh, I don't know," she murmured as she twisted round to straighten her skirt. "If you keep it up you'll learn to dance, Lewis."

When they reached the livingroom, Lewis saw Mackaye leaning against the opposite door, a glass of gingerale untouched in his hand. Lewis returned his hard unflickering stare for a moment; then, suddenly, he winked at him.

Mackaye's eyes narrowed; his lips tightened.

Lewis followed Catherine to the long table at the other end of the room and cut himself a square of Neapolitan ice-cream. Five or six boys and girls were sitting near the table, listening to Johnny Hess as he tilted back and forth in his chair and told stories between mouthfuls of chocolate cake. Catherine crossed over to them, and Lewis started for the empty seat beside her, and then halted.

Josephine Johnson was sitting next to Johnny, listening to his

stories with a bored smile and languidly tapping the arm of her chair. Josephine never talked to Lewis; scarcely listened when he spoke to her.

He stood a moment staring at the spoonful of icecream he was carefully cutting, thinking of her pretty fleshy face. It's because I don't go out for the team, he thought; but she don't really hate me, she'd like me if I'd be decent to her, that's it! he said to himself, I've never paid enough attention to her! He crossed over to the empty chair.

"Hi, Jo!" he said.

She looked up, slightly surprised; stared at him a moment; then dropped her eyes to her tapping fingers.

"Hello," she murmured.

Lewis sank into the armchair opposite her.

"Tell the one about the girl who thought she was in her father's room, Johnny!" he demanded in a loud voice.

"Yeh, I'm apt to," replied Johnny, flipping a dead fly from his glass of birchbeer.

"Go ahead, Johnny!" cried Catherine. "What is it?"

"That one ain't fit to eat," Johnny chuckled. He gulped down the birchbeer and then stretched his long skinny arm out to set the empty glass on the smooth Victrola cover. "I'll tell you one that isn't so good, but—well, it's about a nigger girl, and she comes home after she's been away for a visit, and she's all dressed to kill. And her mother says, 'Why, Mandy! lookit dat fine dress you go on! and lookit dat fine hat you got on! and lookit dem silk stockings you got on! Why, Mandy, whereall did youall get all dem gaudy things?' And Mandy turns round and she says, 'Why, Maw,' she says, 'ain't youall heard the news? I'se been ruined dese last three weeks!' "

The boys roared and the girls tittered. Lewis caught Josephine's eye as she looked up with a tired flickering smile. He leaned forward in his chair.

"Pretty soft being ruined that way, hah, Jo?" he demanded.

Johnny burst out laughing while Josephine smiled and flecked a speck of dust from her skirt. Lewis jerked his chair nearer.

"How about it, Jo?" he went on. "How'd you like to be ruined that way?"

She turned away carelessly.

"Not very much," she said.

Lewis laughed and tried to catch her eye.

"Where'd you get that outfit you came to school in the other day?" he asked.

Josephine turned and stared at him.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

Somebody giggled. The length of the room people were suddenly silent, and they turned to watch Lewis and Josephine. Lewis looked into the girl's cold eyes, and his own commenced to water. He threw himself back in his seat and burst out laughing.

"You know, I bet!" he snickered.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Josephine brushed a crumb from her lap with a shrug. Then she looked up at Marie Freeland, and the two girls laughed. There was a moment's silence. Lewis felt the heat creep up his body.

"You're afraid to tell!" he cried, "but I bet I know!"

Josephine turned and looked him full in the face. He tried to return her gaze, feeling the eyes of the group on his own watery eyes and his foolish grin.

"What's the matter?" he asked, wiggling his foot and laughing. "Gee, I'm only kidding!"

The girl turned away. She muttered something to Fisher and Fisher commenced to laugh. The blood rushed to Lewis' face again.

"Gee, can't you take a joke?" he asked. "Anybody'd think you was in church!—and God was looking down to see if you act nice!"

Josephine did not reply. But Fisher turned in his seat and winked at Mackaye who still stood by the sunparlor door at the far end of the room. Mackaye glanced at Fisher, but his hard unsmiling eyes immediately shifted back to Lewis' face. Nobody spoke.

"Do you act nice and good in church, Jo?"

Again her head turned slowly toward him.

"No, but I mean, do you believe in God? I don't!"

She turned to Fisher with a look of mock appeal. But Lewis sputtered on.

"We decided there wasn't any," he said. "Remember, Art?" he called to Collins.

Collins was standing beside Mackaye; he stared straight ahead, into the hall.

"Yeh," he replied without turning. "I guess so . . ."

Lewis clenched his fists in his pockets. He pressed his teeth till darts of pain shot through them. A smile flickered on his lips, and he glanced from one face to another.

Catherine jumped up.

"Let's dance!" she cried. . . .

Sunk deep in the big armchair against the wall, his eyes followed the dancers, and a smile was fixed on his face. He could leave his body here for them to look at; what did he care? For deep, deep inside were long dark corridors which they could not penetrate.

At the end of the corridor was a court, filled with flowers and the soft whisper of a fountain. Here a beautiful princess leaned over her balcony, the light from the room behind her outlining her form; and standing beneath the colonnade, he wooed her, and then carried her away, away from the palace, out into the wide world; while Catherine stayed in Belerton, married to Mackaye, living in a drab home. Now and then she stole away, going in town to the dock from where he had sailed; and with sad face she watched the ships moving out to the open sea.

"You can take a boat here for anywhere, Kit!" he told her.

"Really?" she was slightly bored; but Lewis continued, his voice low:

"And Kit—I, well, you see—I'm going to take a boat soon . . ." He was kicking at the ground in embarrassment.

"You?" she cried. "Why, Lewis! where are you going?"

He looked up, smiling shyly.

"Why . . . you see . . . I'm going to France . . ."

"France!"

"Yes. To join the French Army. And Kit. . . . If—well, that is—if I should be . . . well—"

"Lewis! You don't mean—"

"Well, you know, it might—And it's for you, Kit! I—you see, the raping of those Belgian women—"

He looked up quickly as somebody tapped his shoulder. Collins was standing over him.

"Mack wants to see you," he said in a low voice. "Outside the sunparlor."

"What for?" asked Lewis.

"How should I know?" replied Collins as he turned away.

When Lewis reached the glass door above the lawn, he could make out the dark form of Mackaye, leaning against a tree trunk just outside. Four other boys stood near him, the lights from the sunparlor shining on their white faces.

"Hey, Raey. Come here a minute."

Lewis slowly descended the three steps to the lawn. Mackaye watched him without speaking for a moment.

"What's the idea winking at me back there?" he demanded at last when Lewis stood before him.

"Huh? I don't know—because I felt like it, I suppose."

Mackaye's eyes measured him.

"Supposing I didn't feel like having you do it?"

"Well . . . gee, then . . . you're out of luck—what's the harm winking at a fellow, anyhow?"

"None of your damned business what's the harm!"

"Well, then. . . . It's none of yours if I do it, I guess."

"By Christ, I'll make it my business!" Mackaye pushed himself away from the tree trunk and buttoned his coat. From the corner of his eye Lewis saw Collins grinning. Two or three other boys came closer.

"What's the matter? Raey going to beat you up?" Lewis saw Fisher's great square jaw, goodnatured but unsympathetic. Mackaye glanced at him and laughed.

"Yeh," he muttered. "I'm just getting ready to run away!"

Lewis laughed.

"Don't run too far; you might lose yourself," he said. He laughed again, but nobody else laughed, and he stopped short. He heard other boys coming to the door behind him; heard them step down into the softness of the lawn.

"Hear that, Mack? Going to stand for that?"

"I told you he was going to beat you up!" said Fisher.

The smile left Mackaye's face. He turned back to Lewis.

"Come over the other side the bushes," he said.

"We're all right here."

"Scared to fight, hah, you goddamn—" He gave Lewis a shove and turned away. Lewis fell against an outstretched foot.

"Cut that out!" he said, as he recovered himself.

"Beat him up here, Mack! We'll close the door!"

Mackaye was near the door; but now he turned back.

"Who'd you say 'cut that out' to?" he demanded.

"To you . . . who'd you suppose?"

"Why, you—" He stepped toward Lewis; Lewis suddenly pushed him away. "—sonofabitch!" he breathed, and he smashed his fist against Lewis' face.

Lewis struck out blindly and hit Mackaye's jaw. Then he jumped forward, one arm in the attitude of protection, the other striking out, like the pictures on the sporting page. Mackaye's fist crashed against his eye.

"No clinching there!" Fisher broke them apart, laughing. "And cut it out, fellows! This is a high class party! Come on, come on! You're both brave men! Now shake on it!"

"Let me at him!" breathed Mackaye. He tried to push by Fisher. "Let me at him, I tell you!"

"Damn you, I say shake hands!" Fisher's great paws grabbed their necks and pushed them together. "Shake hands, Mack?" he cried.

"Cut it, damn you! let me go!"

"Shake hands, Raey?"

Lewis felt the chords of his neck pressing tighter and tighter; the blood rushed to his forehead. But he said nothing. His hand hung, limp.

"You *will* yelp, Raey!" Fisher muttered through his teeth. "You too, Mack!"

"Cut it, I'm yelping!" laughed Mackaye. "Let me go, you sonofa—"

"Hey, cut that! Put out your hand!"

Mackaye reached out his hand.

"You, too, Raey, if you *won't* yelp!"

Lewis laughed weakly and held out his hand. They shook.

"All right! Now!" Fisher let them go and jumped back. Mackaye swung around and kicked him in the thigh. Then he ran into the sunparlor, laughing, while with a roar his friend ran after him.

Lewis waited until the others all entered the house. Then he went through the sunparlor and sauntered across the livingroom to the hall, whistling inaudibly and gazing up at the ceiling to hide his injured eye. When he reached the empty hall he found his hat, and then started carelessly, but quietly, for the big front door.

"Goddamn bastard," he muttered as he shut it gently behind him. "Get fresh with me and I'll knock him for a goal!"

It was after one o'clock, and Miss Colby, his room teacher, had gone home. But when Lewis came in after his last class, he saw Mr. Farlow, the French teacher and athletic instructor hunting through her books at the big front desk, while Catherine was still in her seat by the rear windows.

The rest of the room was empty, and the rough oak floor and chairs and shiny desks were splotched with yellow by the sunlight. Gusts of air, like sea breezes, entered the row of large open windows, fluttering noisily the leaves of the books and sending loose papers swishing along the floor. Beyond the windows the world shimmered in the white light of midday, under a glaring sky in which the sun itself seemed to dissolve. Lewis could see the yellow colonial house set back across the road, standing alone, dazzling and bare. The leaves on the trees around it were hard and blackish-green; the sweep of lawn was withering up.

He walked down the aisle to his own desk, watching the girl beyond him as she held up her desk cover and chose her books for home study. A wisp of gold hair fell over her eyes, and beneath it he could see the tip of her nose. He could see the clear cut of her upper lip and the full wetness of her lower one. Her dress was loose as she leaned over and the smooth white curve of her bare back showed, half way down to the waist.

Catherine stuck four books under her arm, dropped her desk cover with a bang, and stood up. Then she saw Lewis and she smiled.

"Hello, Lewis Raey!" she cried.

"Hi," murmured Lewis. He flung the books of his last class in his desk and then started slowly along the aisle, waiting for her to catch up with him. Farlow lifted his eyes from his book and smiled.

"Are you really going to study all those books, Miss Shipman," he asked, "or do you just want to impress the faculty?"

"Heck!" laughed Lewis, sliding onto the front desk of the aisle, facing the teacher. "Kit does about as much studying as—as—I don't know what!"

Farlow turned to him and his smile disappeared.

"Going out for football this year, Raey?" he asked.

Lewis felt the blood rise to his cheeks and he lowered his eyes, watching his swinging legs. He heard Catherine slip softly onto the desk beside him; felt them both watching him in the silence of the room.

"Sure, I guess so . . . I don't know . . ." He raised his eyes, smiling. "I will if I can," he said, and he looked at Farlow, pressing his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

Farlow was staring at him.

"'Will if you can?'" he repeated. "Who's to stop you?"

"I don't know." Lewis threw back his head and gazed at the ceiling. "Myself, I guess," he said with a laugh.

Farlow echoed the laugh.

"I'm sure I won't," he muttered. Then he started sorting papers.

Lewis glanced at Catherine. She was looking down at her swinging legs.

"Gee," he murmured, "I'd like to . . . I don't know. . . ."

"Why don't you, Lewis?" she demanded, wheeling around.

"Gee, I'd like to, but I'm not much good—do you think I'd make a good man?" he asked Farlow.

Farlow looked up from his papers.

"I don't see why not," he said. "You've got the build. You're a little light, perhaps, but you ought to run well, and we need a couple of good ends."

"Gee, I'd like to try for it!" He'd make a good end, and he'd *tear down that field!*

"Lewis would make a wonderful player, don't you think so, Mr. Farlow?" asked Catherine.

"He ought to. Why didn't you try out last year?"

"I dont know—I always wanted to—gee!" Lewis was banging the iron supports of the desk with his swinging legs. "But . . . I don't know . . ." He leaned forward to Farlow. "I was always scared I'd make some bull, and—I don't know, but—"

"What the deuce!" Farlow interrupted him with a smile, "don't you suppose everybody pulls bone plays to begin with? Do you suppose Charlie Brickley was a star player the first time he ever saw a football?" He laughed, and Lewis laughed too.

"Gee, no! I—when're you going to start practice?"

"Didn't somebody tell you? Right this afternoon! Go home and throw down some lunch and come up the field! I'll give you a chance right away!"

Right away! . . . He lowered his eyes and watched his finger play with the inkwell.

"Gee . . . all right then. . . . You see, Mr. Farlow, I—It wasn't only that, but—I don't know why, but . . . well, I'm always sort of ascared of crowds . . ."

Farlow stared at him and his smile hardened.

"Who are you afraid of?" he asked. "There isn't anybody going to fight you."

"I don't care about that! I'd just as soon—I'd just as soon fight—"

"Who're you going to lick now, Raey?"

Mackaye was standing in the doorway. When Farlow turned, their eyes met and they commenced to laugh. Then Mackaye turned back to Lewis.

"You just tell me when you're going to start beating everybody up," he drawled, glancing at Catherine, "and I'll tear right out the room!"

Lewis laughed.

"All right," he said. He glanced down at the inkwell and laughed again. Mackaye sauntered over to Farlow.

"Who's going to be out this after?" he demanded.

Farlow ran over a list of names.

"And Raey," he finished. He looked up at Lewis. "You're coming out are you, Raey?" he asked.

"Sure." Lewis slipped off the desk and walked to the door. "So long," he murmured as he opened it.

Nobody answered. As he closed it behind him, he heard Mackaye mutter something. Farlow and Catherine laughed.

But he'd go out, he'd make a good player, he'd tear down that old field! He stomped up the steps to the piazza and unlocked the front door. By God, I'll show that bastard! he thought, and the whole house shook as he slammed the door behind him.

"Hello, Ma!" he shouted.

"Hello, Lewikins!" she called from upstairs. "Aren't you home rather late?"

The parlor was darkened to protect the wallpaper. He walked to the center of the room and threw himself in a spindle-legged chair, stretching his feet out and staring at the design on the carpet. . . . He walked to the center of the field, alone, for the tryout, waiting for Farlow to kick the ball to him. Mackaye and Fisher would be standing on the sidelines, ready to laugh at his awkward catch, while the others would be up and down the field, silently watching him. . . . He looked up, to see his mother watching him from the doorway.

"Dinner's ready, Lewis . . ." she murmured.

"All right, Ma." He picked up a book and commenced looking through the pages; but she did not move from the doorway. He turned a page and stared at it.

"What did you come in here for, Lewis?"

Lewis slammed the book shut.

"I don't know, Ma," he whined. "Can't I come in here if I want to?"

"Why, yes, of course. . . . I just thought it was funny, that's all; you never go in here. . . . You don't have to get mad."

He followed her into the diningroom. The curtains were three-quarters drawn, and a glaring light came through the small openings. On the table were the remains of the midweek's roast lamb; it was cold and red near the center. There were baked potatoes, cake, and canned fruit. Lewis seated himself opposite his mother.

"Lillian's gone in town," said Mrs. Raey, picking up the carving

implements, "Will you have a piece off the center or the end, Lewis?"

"Anything, Ma. I don't care."

"Well, you must have some preference."

"Well, give me the center, then."

"It's not very well done there. I intended putting it in the oven but I didn't get around to doing it." She looked up. "Are you sure that's done enough for you?" she asked.

Lewis clenched his fists in his pockets.

"Perhaps I'd rather have the end, Ma," he said in a low voice. In twenty minutes he'd have to go up to the field!

"Well, now, which is it?" she asked with a smile.

"Either, Ma. . . . I don't care what you give me . . ." he added, sullenly.

Her eyes opened wide with hurt surprise.

"Why, Lewis!" she murmured, "what's the matter? I just wanted to know what kind of meat you prefer!"

"Yeh. I don't care. . . . Any kind you don't want, Ma."

He slouched in his seat and watched her carve. . . . He stood in the middle of the field, alone, waiting his turn. . . .

"They give you tougher and tougher meat every time!" his mother said, jerkily. "I'm going to try Mooney next, though I guess he's no better than the rest." She looked up suddenly; the knife stopped and she smiled.

"A penny for your thoughts, Lewis!" she said.

"I'm not thinking anything! . . . Ma . . ."

"Well, you don't have to be so sullen about it. . . . How'd you get along in school today?" she asked as she went on carving.

"All right."

"What did you have?"

Lewis wet his lips.

"Just the regular things," he said.

"Well, what are those, Lewis? You don't have the same things every day, you know."

"I don't know." Lewis spoke low, forcing the words out of him. "English and geometry and French and history . . ."

"English history, isn't it?" she asked, brightly.

"Yeh."

"I had that when I went to school. Whereabouts are you in it now?"

"Oh, I don't know, Ma!"

Again her eyes opened wide in wonder.

"Why, you *are* so touchy, Lewis! I try to be pleasant to you, and you're just as sullen and nasty as anything! What's the matter?" She hesitated. "Did your best girl go back on you?" she asked with a little laugh.

"Yeh . . . sure."

"Well, that *was* mean of her, wasn't it! Now your mother will have to be your best girl, won't she!"

He felt the terrible silence while she waited; he jabbed his fork in his meat.

"Won't she, Lewis!"

"Yes . . . Ma . . ."

"Poor, poor Lewikins. . ." Looking at his plate, he could just see her chin as she shook her head in mock sorrow; when he did not look up, she turned back to her lunch. Lewis heard her cutting and eating her lamb; and he chewed and chewed the cold meat in silence.

After a moment he heard her lay down her knife and fork. He knew she was looking at him, but he kept his eyes on his plate, listening to his jaws chew and chew, feeling the meat descend heavily to his stomach. He cleaned his plate, very, very carefully; then he pushed away from the table.

"Some more meat, Lewis?" his mother asked, quickly.

"No, thanks, Ma."

"What? No more meat?"

"No . . . thank you . . ."

"Well, here! take some preserve and cake!"

He stood up.

"No thanks, Ma," he said.

"Don't you want some of that nice cake?" she demanded in surprise. "Why, Lewis! I made it especially for you!"

"Thanks, Ma, but I'm not hungry." He hurried away; but at

the door he turned. She was sitting there at the table, eating all alone. "I got a hundred in my geometry today, Ma!" he said.

She looked up in glad surprise.

"A hundred? Good work, Lewis! What did your teacher say?"

"Oh, nothing much." He walked out to the hall.

"Come back here and tell me about it, Lewis!"

Lewis ran up the stairs.

"I can't Ma! I got to get ready! I'm going out!"

"Where're you going?" she called.

"Up the football field!"

"Are you going to play football, Lewis?"

"I guess so . . . I don't know . . ."

The china clock over the fireplace in the livingroom said he had ten minutes to wait. He dropped heavily into a rocker by the window—and suddenly craned his neck to look up at the sky. It might be going to rain!

But the sun was there, burning through the thick white sky like a red hot flame through a worn kettle. It cut dazzling squares in the carpet at his feet which in turn threw faint liquid squares on the wall. The black fireplace shone yellow, and torn bits of a letter were blinding bright as they lay scattered about the hearth.

He heard the china clock: *tap, tap, tap, tap*. . . . It was time to go.

He turned listlessly to gaze at the stiff trees and dead houses outside the window. In one of the black windows opposite sat a stout woman, darning and rocking, back and forth, back and forth. She stopped; leaned near the window to thread her needle; then went on rocking, back and forth, back and forth. Her workbasket was beside her.

His eyes wandered back to the room around him. There was a sewing basket directly before him, just like the stout woman's. It stood there, stockings and socks lolling out, like a stupid animal.

From the direction of the football field came a faint shout across the still air; it was time to go. . . .

He stared at the sewing basket. The stout woman was sitting in one window before hers; he was sitting in another window—

Lewis jumped up with a little cry. He crossed to the table and pulled open a magazine.

I'll read just one paragraph, he thought, and then I'll go up.

"The young lady, for all the fact she still believed in him, in his honor and fidelity, if not in an everlasting love which she, as a girl of sense and unsentimentality, felt could not exist, save in some Utopia that was not for her, made it a point to demand before everything else, before, even, she replied to his question—" The words pounded in his brain in the silence of the room, in the silence of the still, sunlit world beyond his back. He strained his eyes, keeping them on the words, keeping them on the words, while his choking breath rose inside him.

"They would try this life, Gladys and John, and if they found it unsuited to their purpose—and their purpose was a very definite one—at least, so far as she was concerned, although she questioned his sincerity about it all—they would simply separate and strike out, each in his own field."

He reached the end of the paragraph. He closed the magazine carefully; stood looking at it a moment. Then he walked back to his seat and dropped into it.

From far away came the sound of cheering. . . .

But the woman in the window across the street did not hear it. She sat there, darning and rocking back and forth before her work-basket.

The cheering was prolonged. Some new material showing up well. Pat Foley, maybe.

Pat was really yellow when it came to a showdown. He could fight and all that, but take in a war, he'd be worse than an old woman; he'd run so fast they'd never find him.

Lewis stared at the blinding patch of light that slowly crept across the carpet to the far wall. It was funny, but he'd never be afraid in battle. Men might be falling all around and the best fighters might be white and trembling, but that's just the sort of a time that he'd be calm. "Come on!" he yelled, and he raced across No Man's Land ahead of his men. Suppose he did fall, what the hell! you can only die once!

"What the hell!" he murmured aloud, staring at the carpet.

And Kit and her husband, Herbert Mackaye, came to visit Europe. They were in a party of tourists, and they had come way

out here to see the great battlefields. Kit dropped behind to tie her shoe lacing. She glanced up.

A dark rotting cross was beside her, leaning on its mound. The words were in French.

She stood up and was hurrying to join the others, when she swung around and looked at it again.

On the cross she saw the name, *Lieutenant Lewis Raey.*

She caught her breath. Lewis was lying there, under that cross; Lewis Raey she had known in high school! She had known him, and—and did she know now for the first time that . . . she loved him?

"Kit!" Mack dropped behind and waited for her.

"Yes . . . dear." She hurried and caught up with him and the others. The party had stopped and was looking at the mass of graves.

"To think," a woman said, "that here, in this dark, cold ground, lie those heros! And we are standing right where they fought!"

The others murmured in agreement. . . . But Kit turned away. She was looking toward the south, but she was thinking of that lonely grave at the northern end, off by itself, with the wooden cross leaning on its mound.

And that night she came again. She came through the darkness, while the wind howled about her ears and her drawn cloak. She reached the grave and threw herself on her knees before it. She knelt, silent, listening to the mournful wail of the wind over the black and barren battlefield. Finally she spoke in a low voice.

"Lewis," she whispered, "what can I say? Can I say 'I love you?' now when it is too late and you are deaf to my call? So late, Lewis, so awfully late . . . and I am so tired. . . .

"I came to straighten your little cross, but . . . I dare not touch it. It is a thing that is sacred, and it is better that it lie, pitiful, desolate. The beauty of your life, Lewis, is in that cross, a beautiful life, cut off, leaving you here, far from home and friends. I will go back with Herbert to our children and the life and gaiety of America . . . but my heart, my soul, all that is high and exalted in me, will be here, Lewis Raey, here with you, in the ground of

the lonely battlefield, under the bitter sky and mournful wind of France. . . ."

He giggled and wiped his sleeve across his eyes. Then he glanced at the clock.

It was nearly three—too late to go up today. But the first day didn't matter; just a lot of talking and deciding about the lineup and things. Tomorrow they'd start in earnest, and then he'd show them! He jumped up and ran out of the room and down the stairs. His mother was sitting by the table shelling peas when he burst into the kitchen.

"Anything I can do for you, Ma?" he called, falling forward and catching his hands against the doorposts with a bang.

"Why, no, Lewis," she replied, looking up. "I thought you'd gone out to play football!"

He lurched forward and pulled himself back, holding the doorposts.

"Well . . . I changed my mind, I guess," he said.

"I'm glad of that, Lewikins. Football's too dangerous! I don't see any sense in the game, anyhow!" Mrs. Raey smiled happily at him. "I'm glad you've got more sense than the other boys around here!"

Lewis dug his hands in his pockets and started kicking the threshold.

"I aren't afraid of getting hurt," he muttered.

His mother smiled proudly.

"I know you're not, Lewis!" she declared. "Do you think I'd ever say my boy was afraid any more than the best boy in town?"

Lewis walked away.

"I don't know. . . . No, you wouldn't, Ma," he called back. And as he slowly mounted the steps again, his lips quivered, and he muttered to himself: "I guess you'd be right if you did, though."

Back in the livingroom he glanced out the window. The woman across the street was gone, and her window was black like the others. He looked around . . . and then dropped back in his old seat.

. . . Once, Kit drove along this street as he was walking home. She saw him and pretended to run him down; but he stood his

ground with mock valor. She laughed, her eyes glittering wet in the wind.

"Well, brave man!" she called, "come on and jump in and take a ride!" . . . Right by that tree that stands so stiffly against the houses, and against the sky. He pulled his finger slowly along the window ledge, staring at the tree. Kit was watching Herb Mackaye play football now . . . and later they'd all ride around town in her car. . . .

His breath rose; he threw back his head and opened his mouth as if he couldn't breathe through his nose. He stood up, pressing his face against the windowpane. Tomorrow she'd be over to the field, and he'd get that ball and tear down the line and—

He stopped, his eyes against the pane, gazing beyond the motionless trees, beyond the dead houses.

"Aw, what's the sense in telling yourself a lot of goddamn lies?" he whispered.

Behind him, the rocking chair creaked slowly to a stand-still. Out in the hall the great clock *ticked* . . . *ticked,* deep and somber.

Lewis threw open the window, and putting his head outside, he took a deep breath.

"What," Miss Howard asked with a bright smile, looking directly at Lewis, "in your own words, is the story of that great poet we are studying today?" Her head slowly turned. "Helen! tell us about him! We should like to know what you think of him!" Then, as Helen McMahon sat motionless, staring in an agony of shame at her desk cover: "Make it brief and concise, please," she said with an air of finality; and the girl slowly stood up.

"William Wordsworth . . ." She cleared her throat; two bright spots rose to her sunken white cheeks, and she stared at the floor while the teacher stared at her. ". . . was born . . . in CockermouthontheDerwentinCumberland, England . . . in . . . eighteen hundred and seventy. . . . He was—"

Miss Howard's even tones cut in.

"That's not only incorrect, but it's idiotic."

The girl lifted her eyes; but Miss Howard was staring at her desk, on which she marked time with the tip of her pencil. The

door softly opened and a boy tiptoed across to the teacher's desk, holding out a note.

Helen McMahon dropped her eyes to her finger that pressed itself white against the wooden cover. Her other hand opened and shut on her handkerchief.

"Henry Wordsworth . . . was . . . born in . . . CockermouthontheDerwentinCumberland, England . . . in eighteen hundred and . . . and . . ."

Miss Howard finished the note. She laid it in one corner and placed a book on it. Helen slipped into her seat.

The teacher raised her head and glanced at the clock.

"Mr. Farlow wishes the boys of the football team to report in the basement," she said. She waited, gazing soberly straight ahead of her till the last player shuffled out of the room and slammed the door behind him. Then she stood up. "I shall see later if anyone can answer that last question coherently," she murmured. "And now," she went on, louder, and brightening, "I'm going to tell you a secret!" Her eyes twinkled mischievously at a girl in the front row. "The poem I had you learn for today was really Senior work! Think of it! But I'm sure Juniors can learn and understand just as well as Seniors! Can't you!" She looked around eagerly and the girls all nodded, while the boy in front of Lewis rolled his pencil down the desk cover. "Can't you? Of course you can! And it's so beautiful I couldn't let you wait a whole year for the treat! Now!" She stepped forward. "Everybody! Milton's 'Sonnet On His Blindness'! "

Scuffling of feet—swishing of dresses—slamming of books—banging of deskcovers . . . They stood in the aisle and waited.

" 'When I——' " commenced Miss Howard, raising her finger.

" 'WHEN I WHEN WHEN WHEN I CONSID CONSIDER HOW MY MY DAYS ARE SPENT——' " The shouting, commencing irregularly, slowly ordered itself to a loud even monotone. Around Lewis the boys hid behind other pupils' backs and waited for the end; they rested against the desks and watched flies crawl across the ceiling, or stared out the window at the dazzling clouds that swam across the autumnal blue sky. Those whom the teacher could see silently moved their lips.

Lewis moved his lips, talking in a whisper.

If I hadn't just stayed home first of all, he whispered, I'd b playing Watingmont this after, and I'd be a damn good player He glanced around, still moving his lips, at the half-dozen boys lef in the room: Cutey Broadhurst who lisped, four boys too small t play, and Feder with the broken arm. I'm not like Cutey, he whi pered, if I just had a chance I'd get that old ball and tear dow that field!

He heard the voice of the prim girl beside him: "'THEY ALS SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT'!" The recitatio was over.

Miss Howard stood rigid a moment in the silence that followe Then she nodded.

The class fell into its seats.

Tapping her fingers with a pencil, she moved forward, her eye twinkling with promise.

"If," she commenced, "if a man, an aged, whitehaired man, wh was thrown into prison simply because he believed in a certai religion and had the courage of his convictions; if this man was tol that his lot would be blindness, absolute and incurable, if he wer on writing; and yet, despite this, he continued disseminating (yo might add that to your list of words; disseminate: d-i-s . . . s-e-m . . . i-n—and so forth) if this man continued disseminating b means of his inspired pen, the truth (as he saw it), what woul you think of him?" She beamed around the class, beating her penc against the palm of her hand—and suddenly her lips tightened; sh glanced sharply at the clock; went back to her seat; and taking M Farlow's note from underneath the book, she scribbled somethin on it.

She looked up and caught Lewis' eye.

"Lewis," she said, shortly, "kindly take this down to Mr. Farlow Then, as Lewis started up the aisle, the hard bright twinkle returne to her eye. "Tell me!" she demanded eagerly, glancing around the class, "what would you think of such a man? Would you ca him 'a little lady'? Marion!"

Lewis glanced at the note as he ran down the dark stairway.

"Miss Howard:

Will you kindly dismiss the football players immediately for signal practice in the basement?

L. M. FARLOW."

"Mr. Farlow:

Is football practice really so important that it should interfere with the disseminating of the knowledge of the works and TRUE *manly inspiration of John Milton?*

yours,

HILDA HOWARD."

"Who knows?" murmured Mr. Farlow as he chucked it into the wastebasket. In the silence of the empty room he turned back to his book. But Lewis still stood beside him.

Why didn't he leave?—but it was too late to go now, it'd look funny; but there was no sense staying when Farlow wouldn't look up, why in God's name didn't he go?

"Well, Raey?" Farlow glanced up coldly.

"Mr. Farlow, I——" His fists were clenched in his pockets, but he raised his eyes to Farlow's. "You see Connors and Feder and Holt are laid up and—well, do you want to give me a chance this after?"

"Doing what?" He started picking out books to take home.

"At football."

Farlow ran his fingers through the pages of a French book to see if it was the one he wanted. Lewis watched him, his heart pounding. Hell, I *asked* Farlow to let me play, he told Kit, what more can a fellow do?

Finally the teacher spoke without looking up.

"I don't see why I should," he said, laying the book in a pile and picking up another. "The other fellows went out and earned their positions."

"I know . . ." Lewis was kicking his toe against the floor.

Farlow looked up.

"Besides, what are you fitted for?" he demanded.

Lewis raised his head. He spoke quickly.

"I run fast and I could play end and—that is . . . I think I could . . ."

"That's just it: you *think*. Why didn't you come out if you thought you could?" He looked at him steadily, and Lewis dropped his eyes again.

"I don't know . . ." he said.

He felt Farlow watching him, and he waited for him to speak; but when finally he looked up, the teacher was drawing a design on the huge green blotter and regarding it reflectively. Lewis edged toward the door; he'd done all he could and the bastard wouldn't give him a chance!

"I did all I could," he muttered to Kit, "and the bastard wouldn't give me a chance."

"I don't suppose I had any right," he murmured as he stepped onto the threshold, "I just wanted to play if there was a chance but——"

"Wait a minute."

"—but I suppose," he went on quickly, "so long as I haven't had any practice . . ." He furtively put one foot into the hall.

"We've got a little time to try you out," he heard Farlow say. "There's not much chance of anything doing, but if you want to put on a suit and hang around—we've only got two ends. Half the team's laid up."

"Well . . . but if you don't think . . ."

Farlow rose.

"You go on downstairs; I'll be there right away."

They were shooting craps when he reached the basement door. A pile of nickels lay in front of the lockers and a half dozen boys knelt around it. Most of them guarded their money with one hand while the other jazzed, ever so slightly, in time with the motion of the shooter.

"Wal Bones, I'm talking to you, Bones! Baby's awful sick! Baby needs some diapers, some brand new diapers! what do you say Bones!"

"Shoot them, for Christ's sake!"

"Just take your time, Brother! Bones is temperamental! There's a

pile of jazzmoney waiting for you, Bones! Look her over! What do you say? Getting hot? All wrought up?

"Bones! Bones! Now she takes it, Bones! *Crap on her!* READ-EMANDWEEP!"

"Cheese it! Here's Farlow!"

The teacher stopped in the doorway near Lewis and carefully brushed the sleeve of his coat while the boys swept up their nickles. Finally he raised his head.

"Got an outfit for Raey?" he called in.

Collins, who was seated on a bench lacing his shoes, looked up at Lewis. Then he swung around.

"Hey, Mack!" he called into the washroom, and his voice beat against the hard walls and tin lockers. "Raey's going to play! Got a suit?"

"Hah? Well, well!" Mackaye's laugh echoed loud and tinny in the washroom. "Sure, I got one! Wait a minute!"

"Mack!" Farlow called. "Give Raey a tryout with the signals here. We may need him in a pinch today! . . . Mack'll tend to you," he added to Lewis. "Wait for him." And he went out.

Lewis sat on a bench and waited, and in a minute Mackaye came in and tossed a pair of cleated boots at his feet.

"Here," he muttered. "Try those."

Pulling the boots closer, Lewis stooped over; and with tight fingers he commenced unlacing his own shoes.

After a half hour's signal practice in the basement the players had lunch and then rode down to the field in a couple of automobiles, sitting in one another's laps and standing on the runningboards. When they arrived a crowd had already gathered.

The field was set in the cup of steep hills. The sun shone through the colored leaves on the western side, giving them deep rich tones, while those on the east flickered with a hard brilliancy in its light. The wind was brisk, and the branches of the topmost trees tossed about, while now and then a breeze descended to seep through the clothes of the spectators and make them shiver.

Lewis jumped out of the machine and stood in the group of players. One by one those who were going to play were counted out and lined up on the field, and soon he was alone on the sidelines.

His suit was too small for him, and his wrists shot out and his neck shot out. He put his hands in his pockets and stared straight ahead at the team, looking neither right nor left, standing by himself.

"Hi, Raey!"

He turned and saw a group of small boys watching him. The one who spoke stood in front of the others, his arms folded, his steady eyes on Lewis.

"Hi, there," said Lewis, and he turned back.

The boy circled around until he stood before Lewis; the others followed him.

"Going to play, Raey?"

"I don't know . . . I guess so."

They whispered among themselves; all save the first boy, who did not take his eyes from Lewis.

"I bet we win," he said, simply.

"Sure we will," murmured Lewis, staring hard at the team.

"Sure we will," mimicked one of the boys in a low voice.

They all laughed. The boy in front glanced around and laughed with them. Then he turned back to stare solemnly at Lewis.

Lewis' eyes carefully followed the flight of a Watingmont man down the field with the ball. In the din of shouts and cheers, he turned and strolled along the sidelines, glancing quickly at the small boys from the corner of his eye. They were following him.

Catherine was standing at the end of a line of girls. She looked up and smiled in surprise.

"Hello, Lewis Raey!" she called. "Are you going to play?"

"He thinks he will!" one of the boys shouted.

Lewis reached her side, and the boys halted a few feet away.

"I guess so . . ." he said. "I hope so."

"Good for you! Lewis is going to play, girls!" she shouted. The girls beyond Catherine looked down the line at him.

"Good for you, Lewis!" they called.

"Isn't that fine! what are you going to play?"

"I don't know . . . End, I guess . . ."

They stood beaming at him. Behind, the small boys waited in silence.

"Look! look at Ed tackle that man!"

Lewis turned, to see Fisher butting into the hard line. It came crashing down on him.

"Oh! he'll be murdered!"

Fisher appeared from the struggling mass. His man was downed.

"Good for him! wasn't that wonderful, Lewis!"

"Yeh . . ."

He watched them . . . standing in his heavily padded uniform among the girls. He looked down at the short sleeves that showed his thin bare wrists; then he glanced up at the girls and small boys. When nobody was looking, he jerked off the hot padded headpiece.

"'*Who Can Play A Game Of Ball!*' Come on girls!" Catherine linked arms with the girl next to her and the line commenced to sing. Lewis stepped away.

"'*Who can play a game of ball?*
Belerton, O Belerton!'—Come on and sing, Lewis Raey!" She reached over and grabbed him. The girls were swinging back and forth, and she linked her arm through his.

"'*Who can beat opponents all?*
Belerton, O Belerton!'"

They took a step forward and took a step back. He tried to stand still, but his arm was jerked every time . . . He took a step forward and took a step back. The small boys behind commenced to laugh.

"'*Where are heroes brave and strong,*
Who can break the serried throng,
Who can sweep the ball along . . . ?'"

He took a step forward and a step back. He pressed his lips tight; but he took a step forward and took a step back. The small boys formed a row beside him. They pressed their lips tight and took a step forward and took a step back.

"Come on and sing, Lewis!" Catherine cried. "Aren't you patriotic? The second verse, girls!"

"'*Where are manly players found?*
Belerton, O Belerton!
Where are muscles hard and sound?
Belerton, O Belerton! . . .'"

He opened his mouth and a low sound came out. He tripped an clutched Catherine's arm. Then he took a step forward, and a ste back . . .

Farlow was hurrying over.

"Higgins is out," he called. "Want a try at end?"

Catherine gave him a shove.

"Hurray for Lewis!" she cried. "Go on in and win!" And all th girls cheered.

The two lines had formed and were waiting for him as he steppe to his place at the end nearer the girls and small boys. All the me were crouched down, motionless, and he crouched down, too.

It was Watingmont's ball. Leaning forward, swaying, tense an trembling, he listened to the highpitched voice of the quarterback singsonging his signals. A sudden rush; a crash against his shoulde bowling him over. He saw a Watingmont man break through th tackle and end, and rising to his knees he threw his arms aroun the man's legs. Suddenly the play was over and the field was quie

The Watingmont man looked down with openmouth surprise a Lewis released him and rose to his feet.

"For Christ's sake what're you tackling me for?" he drawled. " ain't got the ball."

"Don't be rough, Raey!" Mackaye called from behind the lin "You want to look out for that lad, fellow!" he added to the Watin mont man. "He's the toughest guy on our team!"

Lewis felt the laughter of the teams beat against him as he walke between the two lines to his place at the end. He gazed at th ground, grinning, hearing his own laugh rumble low and hoars inside him.

He raised his eyes as the Watingmont quarterback passed th ball; he saw the lefthalfback take it and come running for his en Lewis darted toward him; tripped; and was accidentally kicked fu in the face. He jumped up and tore after the halfback, butting h way through two Watingmont men, arriving just as the runner wa downed.

Collins trotted beside him to their places.

"That's the spirit, Raey!" he said.

His face smarted and his head throbbed as he stood waiting

his place; his body trembled with pentup force. But the next two advances of a yard each were made through center, and he felt himself cooling. He shook his head and it recommenced to throb, and his body hardened again.

It was Watingmont's last down. The line spread for a forward pass, and Lewis sidled quickly along till he was facing the other end.

Signals were called. A Watingmont halfback shot through the far end of the Belerton line, whirled around, and raised his arms with a shout. The quarterback drew back to throw the ball.

Then, suddenly, he spun half around. The leftend had slipped behind Lewis and was waiting, and the quarterback shot him the ball. All over the field there was a second's breathless silence. The ball, thrown too low, was coming straight for Lewis, six inches above his head!

Lewis saw it come. Like a comet through a void, the concentration of his destinies, it hurtled toward him, paralyzing him. Why did it come so straight, leaving him no chance to muff it, why did it have to come for *him,* why——

He shot up his hands and the ball crashed into them. He brought it to his chest and started down the field.

Down, down, down for the goal posts! Along the lines they held their breath; then burst in a cheer. The other team, astounded by the intercepted forward pass, started down after, but he had a clear field. The girls danced and screamed as they saw him fly along. Down for the goal posts! eyes straight, mouth set——

Lewis flew along. Something's wrong, he told himself; why don't they come after me? Stop and look behind you! But he flew straight along.

On! on! fleet as a deer he ran! Aching and ecstatic, the girls screamed his name. On! on! the others hurried after him. An empty field ahead of him! ten clear yards in back of him! *Go it, Raey!* they shouted to him; *run, Lewis, run!*

On! on! now they're calling after me! I've made a bone play, he thought, I've done something wrong! You've got to make a down with an intercepted ball, he thought. The guys are back there laughing now, *why can't you stop or turn?*

On! on! Catherine waved and called to him.

"Who says he can't do anything?" she screamed to Marie.

Can't stop, he whimpered, can't ever do anything! I wouldn't dare breathe if they left it to me!

Swift as a hare, as the breath of the wind he ran! On down! run down! under the bar for a touchdown!

On and on and on . . .

The air cut into his nostrils and filled him with its keenness. It cleaned his body, enveloped him, and he was a part of autumn! He was a part of autumn, of the windswept carpet of dried leaves, of the cleancut gorgeous leaves on the branches that separated for the wind to pass and showed the steelblue sky beyond. He was a part of the sky, too. He was a part of everything belonging to autumn that comes down from the north, cleansing, lifting, and painting with cold rich colors! He had swept along with the coming of autumn into glory, an athlete, clean like the wind! Down the line the ball under his arm, while Kit watched him from the sidelines while the crowd watched him, cheering him, calling his name!

The woods opened in a wide aisle of tall elms, lifting great arms that met in the sky way overhead, and he strode, fast as ever, along the thick carpet of leaves that crinkled as his feet sank into them. The high branches formed cathedral windows, and the descending sun shot swords of yellow through them to the ground. Rich cathedral colors all around; higher and purer. Incense of fruits and dead grass.

Suddenly he halted; stood on his toes and breathed in deep, and the crisp air cut into his head, making his eyes water. He stood a moment, tense, swaying a little. Then he jerked his cap down and strode on.

On and on he swept down the field, borne on the breath of their cheers, sweeping over them like a hero, a god, like the autumn wind. *Lewis!* she called; *Lewis! Lewis Raey!* they screamed; and in his own name was the sharpness of a heartstab, the sharpness of burning liquor.

On and on. He cut through luxuriant sumacs, brushing against their brilliant red-and-green Christmas colors. Now he was sur

rounded by clusters of slender white birches with cold frosted leaves, and he cut on through them. Above him rose great oaks, whose large crackling leaves were like red leather or old brown books, and winesplashed parasites climbed their sides.

He reached the edge of a cliff, just as the sun set. The western sky above the hill opposite was a seething furnace, behind regularly spaced bars of bare black treetrunks; and beneath him in the valley, piles of red maples vibrated like heat waves. He walked quickly along the edge of the cliff, his eyes on the cold and purple hill that now hid the sun, on the shafts of wistful light that stretched above it, through the cold burning sea of color, far into the dead zenith.

Vibrating scarlet, dull gold and amber; a world painted with clean rough colors; a world crisp and fresh like the autumn wind, lifting in an agony of aspiration as the hidden sun lifted its shafts of light to the faraway dead zenith . . . And then, suddenly, he was aware of a cold blueness spreading over the earth; icy, invisible, and silent.

He slowed down; stopped; slumped heavily into the mass of dried leaves before a small stream. He stared listlessly at the leaves, curled like attacked caterpillars, and at last he gently ran his fingers through their dry crispness. That feels nice, he thought, bringing his hand back to do it again.

Night, like a furtive woman, crept through the woods. A dark bar fell across the open grass before him, touching his knee; growing darker . . . darker; and without lifting his head, he knew the moon was over the treetops, riding in the clear cold sky.

Slouching way over, his arms hanging limp, he raised his eyes to the stream that glittered in the light of the moon, full with the waters of autumn, and moving slowly along like the sparkling train of an empress; to the dead poplar before him, raising its ebony hand with fingers steeped in silver, standing black and motionless in front of the gleaming water.

There was something lulling about the smooth fullness of the water, something terrifying about the black sleekness of the still straight poplar. In the cities of the world, lights are beginning to appear. In Paris and Budapest and Venice, the warm lights are

appearing in clear glass windows . . . but he was alone in th secrecy of the autumn night, alone with the moon.

Slowly his head dropped back, and far, far up, over the treetop over the clouds, he saw the moon, the riderless moon, gallopin across the sky, swift and silent; leaping onto a cloud, flying acros it and jumping into the open sky again, casting a shadow of ligh as she passed. Way down here is the earth, glowing with home lights, hazy with the smoke of trains that bellow as they puf along. But the riderless moon makes no noise as she flies over th clouds and out, into the blue plain of the night. Far, far behind out of sight, the sweating sun mounts the heavens in pursuit; an the riderless moon flees on and on, shining on the busy unheedin world, shining on *them,* alone here by the stream.

She stood in the moonlight, in the open space before him. Sh was Russia's most beautiful dancer, dancing near the Grand Cana beyond the lights of Venice, dancing for him, because he under stood her, and the others didn't. Her face was beautiful and cu in marble; she was draped in thin white veils; and as her beautifu body swayed she lifted her slender arms, and a veil fluttered loos and settled slowly on the grass.

He saw her body beneath the gauze. He saw her eye and lip and her throat. Another veil fluttered off, and he saw her legs, thei curves and softness.

Another veil. Only one remained. It lifted as she breathed, an he could see the smoothness of her belly; her navel, as the ve smoothed out. He could see the crease of her joints at the knee a she moved.

She stopped and looked into his eyes and smiled. The last ve slipped down; from her breasts; from her soft belly; to her knees and to the ground.

She stood smiling at him. She took a step toward him. Stopped She knelt in the grass. She lay outstretched.

Her head turned toward him. Her lips smiled to him. Her arm moved slowly . . . her legs moved slowly——

Lewis looked at his hand in horror. Then he got up and ran hom as fast as he could go.

CHAPTER FOUR

It was Sunday afternoon in late August, and Lewis and Catherine sat together near the top of Reservoir Hill, under a sweep of dead white sky. Catherine was looking at a mosquito bite on her arm.

"Isn't it hot," she murmured, licking the spot.

Lewis sat very still, staring before him, feeling a tremor far down within him that waited to suffuse him with heat. Now, when her dull voice cut the calm, it rose through his body, covering him with burning hate; and then ebbed away, leaving his clothes cold and clammy.

"Yeh . . . It's mighty hot, isn't it?" he replied. He could feel her almost as if she touched him, her soft sweaty body, slouching over as he slouched over, her white dress clinging to her legs that were too fat and flabby around the thighs. All their old friends had gone away; to school, to work, to the mountains and beaches for the summer. And I, he thought, I got to hang around like I'm tied to her; he stared with openmouth dullness across the meadows and low hilltops . . . for three more weeks; and then three more years of Tech and home at night, Tech and home again——

The hot blood swept unbearably through his body, and he wanted to jump up and throw his arms about. He wiggled and scratched his back; then he slumped into his old position. He heard Catherine reach behind her and wipe her dress up and down her sweating back.

"Gosh, it's hot," she said.

"Yeh . . ." Lewis cleared his throat. "Gee, yeh!" he murmured.

Over his head the sun glowed, a splotch of hot yellow in the sweep of white sky. Slowmoving clouds wrapped themselves about it like a windingsheet; but steadily, steadily, it was burning its way through. Down beyond the meadows a church bell was ringing, calling worshippers to service; and he knew he had been hearing it a long time, a requiem tolling for Sunday afternoon, echoless on the still air above the meadows.

Steadily, silently, the sun burned its way through the thick white sky; and at last it appeared and shone down upon them.

"The sun's come out," murmured Catherine. "Now it's going t be hotter."

"Yes," *damn you can't you talk about the* MOON? "I guess it wi be . . ." Her knee touched against his and his body tensioned; bu he did not move.

And now clusters of slanting roofs below him opened hot brass eyes. Beyond the meadows wound the glaring white thread th was Lexington Street, and a tiny Ford moving along it caught stabbing spark of light and carried it, on and on, slow and stead while he watched it with lips quivering with hate. He could see mass of white dresses in the rear seat.

Pa and Ma and all seventeen children going on a sticky picnic, h thought; and he wished he was dead. He cleared his throat.

"I wish I was . . . I wish I was somewhere besides this dead o town," he murmured glowering through slitted lids at the motio less moving automobile. "Don't you . . ."

Catherine selected a tender grass sprout to chew on.

"Yes," she said, commencing to chew on it, "I'd like to be bac at the beach. I don't see why Dad had to come home before Augu was over." She chewed and gazed reflectively ahead of her. "I gue you and I are about the only people around," she said.

Lewis leaned over and selected a sprout for himself.

"I don't mean that," he explained, pulling out the tender en very very carefully. "I mean——" Suddenly he jammed the sta in his mouth and bit it. "Wouldn't you like to get out of th darned old town, Kit?" he demanded, "Belerton, Boston—I don know——" He held the mangled sprout close between his eyes an frowned at it. "Just go off somewhere and—and . . . I don know . . ." he murmured; and he stuck the sprout in his mou again.

"I like to go to New York a couple of times a year and see th shows and things, but——"

Just to get out of here, get away, far far off! *In the center of t Forest*—don't tell her that, you damn fool! But he swung aroun jerking impatiently at the sprout while she talked.

"—but I'm always glad to get back home again," she said. "Ne York's a good town to have some fun for a couple of weeks," s

went on, gazing at the chewed stalk she was slowly winding around her finger, "but the boys there don't dance so good. They sort of hop."

He stared openmouthed at her a moment. Don't tell her, *don't* tell her, he kept repeating; and then he said:

"I mean, Kit, didn't you ever have—I don't know——" He lowered his eyes. Then suddenly he scrambled to his knees and looked at the girl who still stared before her; his body was tingling and his eyes watered, because he knew she would understand. "I mean, when I was a kid—I don't know—Grandma Hopkins, my grandmother, used to tell me stories, you know, regular kid stories, and —I don't know—but she told me about an obelisk that's in the center of the Forest of Fontainebleau and it's got roads leading away from it and—and——" Suddenly he sank back on his haunches and turned his head away. "—and I'd sort of like to go there," he finished with a little laugh. He dropped to his elbow; on his back. He lay outstretched, staring at a patch of widening blue, way overhead. "I don't know why," he said; and he laughed again.

Catherine was hunting for another stalk.

"I'd like to go to Paris," she murmured. "Dad says we may go across next summer if things are all right over there."

Lewis raised himself to his elbow. Beyond the meadows and the houses, he could see the far-off coil of blue river; and beyond that, in the distant shimmering heat, the city rose on its hills, a vibrating haze with here and there a spark of gold—a steeple, a sweeping dome, the windows of a high officebuilding, that caught the light of the sun behind him.

On the other side of the hills was the harbor and the ocean he would cross. And he pictured different places: Oxford, with young men lounging beneath ivycovered walls, discussing poetry and philosophy; Spain, where passionate girls awaited him, leaning on their balcony rails in the light of a Mediterranean moon; Fontainebleau, and a straight road leading on and on through the forest, and a young man swinging down it, on his way to Rome and Bagdad and the end of the earth! What did he care about Kit and her flabby legs, what did he care about this old town and everybody in it?

Some day soon he'd break away from it, free, forever free! and he'd never come back, you bet!

Catherine looked at him curiously.

"What are you smiling about, Lewis?" she asked. And then suddenly she jumped up. "Gee!" she cried, "I told Mother I'd be home early and help entertain those darned old maid aunts of mine! You got to come along, Lewis!" she said. "I think I'd die without somebody young around!"

It was after nine when he left Catherine's, and as he turned into Orchard Avenue the sexton of the Catholic Church ahead was closing the big doors after evening service. Helen McMahon, who used to go to highschool with him, was slowly descending the wide bare steps, and in the yellow light of the streetlamp he could see her large loose mouth move as she whispered to herself. She reached the sidewalk and walked along ahead of him, under the line of dark maples.

Lewis passed the church, feeling his head itch and removing his hat to scratch it a few doors further on. When he reached the girl's side he circled around to go by her.

"Hello, Helen," he murmured, touching his hat.

The girl answered in a hoarse whisper, deep in her throat. Lewis glanced back as he passed and caught the glint of her eyes watching him through the darkness. He slowed down.

"It's a nice night, isn't it?" he said.

"Yes . . ." she replied, so low he could scarcely hear her.

He looked at her from the corner of his eye, and in the flickering light through the maples he could just make out the slight curve of her breasts. He thought of her face, anæmic, with sunken cheeks and an eternal silly grin, and his stomach tightened.

"You—" He cleared his throat and spat through his teeth. "You live in the Village, don't you?"

"Yes . . ."

"Then I guess you take the shortcut through the field like I do." He stifled a giggle and cleared his throat again with a rasping sound. "It's a lot shorter for you that way, I guess," he rumbled deep in his throat.

The girl did not reply. For several moments they walked along in silence.

"Isn't it?" asked Lewis in a low voice.

"Yes . . ."

They crossed the path through the field, Helen walking ahead. Beyond her dark form he could see the grove of trees through which they must pass lifting their black branches high against the stars. It would be very dark in there, he thought, and—but he clicked the thought short, for his stomach was sick and heavy, and he had to press his teeth to keep them from chattering.

The trees rose higher and blacker, and at last the girl was swallowed in their shade. Lewis quickened his step until he was directly behind her; then he reached out his hand.

His fingers brushed against her waist and then dropped to his side. What could I say, he thought, if she didn't want to? He half raised his hand again, and then hesitated; and for some time he followed her, one hand warding off invisible branches, the other almost touching her back, while he listened to her feet crash through the broken twigs and underbrush.

"Let me——" He coughed. "Let me get ahead and clear the way!" he said, and suddenly he pushed against her. But just then she stepped into the clearing. A hundred feet ahead was the wooden fence; and beyond that was the road, where their ways separated.

Helen reached the fence, took hold of the crossbar, and started climbing. Lewis hurried to her side, stepped on the bottom bar, and lifting himself up, he put his free hand half around her waist to help her. As the girl put one leg over the bar, he raised his own foot, and it caught under hers.

Helen grunted and grabbed at the air, while he clutched her arm. Then she pitched forward, falling on her side, with Lewis on top of her.

For a moment they lay very still. Then Lewis half raised himself.

"Did you hurt yourself?" he whispered.

The girl rose to her knees, and he stood up.

"Did you . . . get hurt?" he whispered again, standing close to her.

"Yes." She got up and dusted her knees.

"I'm sorry," he breathed. He stepped closer, and then hesitated. "Bad?"

The girl straightened.

"No," she answered low. Then she started off down the hill, limping slightly.

"Well . . . goodnight. . . ."

He heard her low mutter in reply. For a long time he watched her dark form descend the hill. Twice he started forward, but both times he hesitated, and then it was too late.

She hurt her leg, he thought, his heart still pounding; why didn't I ask her *where?*

He hurried home, almost running. He ran up the front steps of his house and unlocked the door. In the livingroom his father and mother were arguing loudly, and he tiptoed up to his own room, closing the door softly behind him. Here he tore off his clothes in the dark and then jumped into bed.

Helen started climbing the fence; he climbed behind her, and as she stepped over, his foot caught under hers. She grunted and pitched forward, falling on her side with him on top of her. For a moment they lay very still; then he whispered: did you hurt yourself? The girl was writhing and moaning. Yes, she breathed. But Lewis did not move. . . .

. . . Lewis did not move. He sat on the edge of his bed, hunched over, staring openmouthed out of the window. The summer twilight had washed out the sky. Trees, houses, hills, all stood stark and naked, waiting for the cloak of darkness. Every single thing was clearcut, strained and immobile, waiting for the darkness. The bullfrogs beat a tomtom on the hollow drum of the hour; the even, cutting shriek of the toads moved on and on and on, stretching like a level horizon across it. The crickets chirped . . . chirped. Voices, low and indistinct, came from the piazzas.

His eyes turned slowly around the darkening room and then back to the window. The design on the wallpaper was still very visible, and every leaf on the tree just in front of him stood out intimately. Under the washed gray of the sky, he could see the upper stories of the house across the street. The windows stared at him, black and

empty. One of them was open, and a lace curtain stirred in the breeze.

Every day, he thought; every single day since I met her last Sunday. I can't stop . . . I won't ever stop. . . . He fell back, his arms spread limply on the bed, and he gazed up at the ghostly ceiling.

Outside, a woman's voice cut the twilight and beat against the immobile trees . . .

The trees sharpened . . . the houses sharpened . . . A breeze rustled the leaves of the poplars, and he felt its soft breath enter his darkening room. He could hear one sheet of a newspaper that lay on the floor open fully and almost noiselessly, and then settle down again.

If only I'd left Kit's house a minute earlier, he thought, just a minute earlier! then I would have passed the church before she came out and then—*but I didn't, I didn't!* He jumped up, crossed the room, and sank into a rocker. He stared through the gray square of his window toward the far darkening hilltop.

Fear, like a terrible hunger, crept into his stomach; and he sat still and unresisting, feeling it pull at his heart. If he kept on, he would get sick and pale and people would start talking; and then, he thought, then you go crazy. . . .

The voice of the woman across the street rides out among the still trees. . . .

Rocking slowly back and forth, he listened as it cut the silence; and in that echoless voice was the grayness of the life around him, the staleness of the town, the dullness of people, driving him back here to the secrecy of his room. He looked around at the darkening walls and thought of ways to escape and start over: a lumber camp down in Maine, maybe, or a job on a cattleboat going to Liverpool; but it all seemed faraway and unobtainable, and he shook his head at the distant hilltop, slowly rocking back and forth. If only he could get away from home, if he could leave Tech and go away to a real school—*that was it!*

He stopped rocking and stared at the window. A tingling hope rushed through his body, and he jumped up and ran out of his room and down the stairs.

His father and mother were at the other end of the long screened piazza. Thick clematis vines rose to the roof and shut them in from the deepening twilight, but he could hear the calm *creak . . . creak* of his mother's rocker, and beyond that the slower rock of his father's chair, moving as the red glow of his cigar moved.

"Hello, dear," murmured his mother.

"Hello, Ma." His own voice was low in the stillness of the summer evening. He stood in the doorway, staring at their vague forms and listening to the deathless call of the crickets beyond the screen. Then he started pacing the long narrow enclosure.

His mother stopped rocking to let him pass. His father drew his legs in.

"Sit down and make yourself comfortable, Lewis," he said in his deep voice.

"All right, Pa." He reached the end and stuck his nose against the mustysmelling screen. The trees and houses were dark and sharp against the white sky, and from the fields beyond came the shrill cry of the toads. Over in that direction was the Village, where Helen lived; he whirled around and started back.

His father drew his legs in.

"Lots of chairs, Lewis," he rumbled. "Make yourself at home."

"All right—" He sidled past his mother. "—Pa." He reached the end; stared through the screen a moment; started back——

"For God's sake, will you sit down!"

"You're restless tonight, aren't you, dear?" added his mother.

Lewis halted before his father. He gazed at the glowing cigar end.

"Pa," he said, breathlessly, "I want to go away to school!"

His father removed the cigar from his mouth.

"You what?"

"I want to go away to school," he repeated hurriedly, "to Cornell or—or California or—" Oxford was on the tip of his tongue. "—or some place like that," he finished.

"How'd you like a couple of million besides?" asked his father.

"Randolph, don't do that!" Mrs. Raey reproached him; then she added: "What do you want to go away for, Lewis?" She hesitated. "Sort of tired of us old—old stickinthemuds, as the boys say?" And in the darkness he could hear her titter.

"No, Ma, of course not!" he replied. "It's not that! It's just—well, Tech's no good, except for study—and it's not so good for that now," he added quickly. "Lots of schools in the country are considered just as good now, and then you get in with real fellows and not a lot of old stickin—well, you know, those kind of fellows, and you have better athletics and serious discussions and, well, college life, because you *live* there, see?"

"Don't say *see* dear," murmured his mother.

"I see," replied his father. "Now turn over and try the other side."

"But Pa!" cried Lewis, "can't you understand? can't you see?"

"I'm afraid it's too dark."

Lewis was on his toes, leaning way forward, clenching and unclenching his fists in his pockets.

"Don't you see?" he almost whispered, "can't you see it means I'll have a new chance—a chance, I mean, to—to do something?" He swayed back and forth, staring at the cigar end and holding his breath.

There was a long silence. Then at last came the deep rumble.

"You're talking serious? You mean all this talk?"

"Yes, I do!" whispered Lewis, "I do!"

"Then all I can say is, you're wasting——" His father broke off. "No," he snapped.

"Pa!"

"Randolph," murmured his mother, "maybe Lewis has got some good reason. . ."

"No."

"If—if I——" Lewis tried to steady his quavering voice. "If I earn some . . . if—if . . ." His voice trailed away.

"No," said his father.

Slowly he sidled by his father. His mother stopped rocking to let him pass.

"Excuse me, Ma." He reached the screen door and pulled it open.

"Going for a walk, Lewis?" she asked, softly.

"Yes, Ma."

"Where're you going?"

"I don't know, Ma," he murmured. "Just for a walk . . ."

He walked down Adams Street and into Winthrop Avenue. He

could see the vague rocking forms along the piazzas, and their low voices came out to him, indistinct like themselves, merging one into another as he passed from house to house. Some children were playing in Merrill's backyard.

"Maaary! Oo—ooo!"

"Yes, Mamma!"

"Bedtime, dear!"

"Yes, Mamma! Just a minute!"

The voices were hollow and there was no echo on the still air, The shrilling of the toads kept on and on and on. The sky was colder and clearer, and the poplars held their naked forms tense, waiting for the darkness.

He walked along, and at last the streetlamps, stretching far ahead of him, suddenly and silently opened their eyes. He slowed down at the corner of Orchard Avenue where the houses were set way back among the trees. He stopped, his hands in his pockets, and he slowly kicked at a crack in the asphalt, gazing at the great arc lamp that shone through the greenblack leaves ahead. Which way shall I go now, he wondered.

If he went down Orchard Avenue, he could turn back along Green Street; up Adams Street; and home. Or he could go up Orchard Avenue, under the line of maples; along Cottage Street; down Adams Street; and home. For a moment he thought of walking over to the Village again, and his stomach tightened; but then he remembered the girls, sitting on the tenement stoop, who saw him twice and who giggled the last time he passed. No, he'd better go back to the house.

He kicked at the pebbles, staring ahead of him; and as he thought of home and going to bed, the old fear slowly crept into his stomach. I can't get away from it, he whispered; and something choking rose to his throat that hurt when he gulped it down.

Then suddenly he remembered that paragraph in the Y. M. C. A. book. Just before bedtime, it said, take a long run, and return home only when you are good and tired. Quickly remove your clothes, take two aspirin tablets in water, followed by a cold shower and a rubdown. Then hop into bed.

Lewis swung around with a sudden elation and started running

up Winthrop Avenue; on, on, the length of the avenue, whirling around the corner of Adams Street. His family was still on the front piazza and he slipped in the back door and ran noiselessly up the steps to his room, where he pulled off his clothes and rushed into the bathroom, gulped down two aspirin tablets, jumped in the shower and turned on the cold water faucet. He rubbed himself quickly with a Turkish towel, ran back to his room, slipped on his pajamas and hopped into bed where he lay very still.

They both lay very still. Then he whispered: did you hurt yourself, Helen. . . .

He turned over and buried his face in his pillow to smother the sound of his sobs.

"Oh God, oh God!" he whispered, "I wish I was dead, I wish I was dead!"

The warm sun was pouring through the open windows when he came in the diningroom the following morning. His father was reading his newspaper and smoking his afterbreakfast cigar, and the smoke hung in a soft cloud above the table. There was the rich scent of grilled bacon and percolating coffee. Outside, the lawn was sparkling and longshadowed.

His mother looked up when he came in, and then quickly lowered her eyes to the cup in her hand.

"You're late, Lewis," she murmured. "Didn't you hear me calling you?" A queer twisted smile flickered on her thin lips.

"Yes, but . . . this is vacation."

His father lowered his paper.

"Dishes have to be washed vacation same as any other day, Lewis," he said.

Lewis fell into his seat and spread his napkin. His sister was buttering her toast.

"Too much late hours, young man," she declared. "If you don't go to bed nights you can't expect to get up."

"Aw—bull . . ."

"There's no bull about it! When I was your age I wasn't allowed to hang around the streets the way you do!"

Lewis broke his egg and spread it on his toast.

"You had a pretty tough time of it, didn't you," he muttered without looking up.

"I was supposed to be in the house once in a while, if that's what you call having a tough time. Kids didn't act as if they didn't have any homes in those days."

"Back in the dark ages, wasn't it, Lillian," murmured his mother, and again a tight smile trembled at the corners of her mouth. Then she added hastily: "You really ought to stay home more, Lewis."

"Why?" he asked, incuriously, putting a chunk of toast in his mouth.

His father's paper came down.

"There's no sense asking why, Lewis," he said. "When your mother tells you something, isn't that enough?"

"Uh-huh."

"Well, then . . . What time did you get home last night?"

He stared at his plate and chewed viciously, remembering how he slunk into the house and to bed before night had fairly settled down.

"I don't know . . . about eleven, I guess," he replied, gazing steadily at his plate.

"Guess again, old dear," said Lillian. "I was reading until half past eleven and I didn't hear you come in before I put my light out."

Lewis took a gulp of coffee.

"You'd make a good teacher, wouldn't you," he murmured as he dug his finger in the bottom of the cup to loosen the sugar.

"Don't do that, Lewis." Something in his mother's voice made him glance up. There was a hungry look in her great eyes that surprised him for a moment. "Always take your spoon to loosen the sugar, dear," she said.

Lillian was looking at him with an irritating smile; but her eyes were hard and unsmiling.

"Where'd you go last night?" she demanded.

"None of your business."

"Pa! do you think Lewis ought to talk to me that way?"

"My goodness," murmured his mother, "your dignity is easily ruffled."

But the newspaper came down again.

"Do you think you ought to talk to your sister that way, Lewis?"

"Well, it isn't any of her business, is it? What right's she got asking me those questions?" He glared from one to the other; then he jabbed his fork into his egg-on-toast. "How many mothers have I got, anyhow?" he muttered, shoving it into his mouth.

"Only one now, dear; and pretty soon——" His mother coughed; and when he looked up she was smiling at the crumb she snapped across the tablecloth. "Your father has something to tell you——" She glanced up at him, smiling brightly, "—that I'm sure will please you," she finished.

When Lewis turned, his father was carefully folding the newspaper. Now he slipped it into his pocket and raised his eyes to the window behind his wife. A moment passed before he spoke while Mrs. Raey commenced drumming on the table.

"Your mother and I talked for a long time last night, Lewis," he finally said without turning from the window, "and we decided —your mother thought—if you want to go away to school for a term . . . by next June, anyhow——"

"Pa!" Lewis jumped up.

"What's the kid want to go away for?" asked Lillian, turning curiously from her father to her mother.

Lewis snapped around to her.

"None of your business," he said. Then he snapped back to his father.

"Perhaps it's to learn some manners," murmured Lillian. "If he were my kid——" She leaned over and took a sip of coffee.

"Oh, Lillian," said his mother, " 'if he were your kid'." Her voice sounded very tired. "Perhaps some day you'll have a kid of your own, and then——"

"—by next June, anyhow," Mr. Raey continued, still staring out the window, "you'll know—we'll all know—whether it's wisest for you to come back to Tech or not. I think it's all foolishness myself; but your mother thinks, if you think you can study better——"

"Study?" cried Lillian. *"Him?* WHOOPS!" She flung back her head in supplication.

Lewis whirled around.

"Will you keep your face shut?" he asked.

Lillian turned to her mother.

"Mamma——" she commenced.

Her mother turned to Lewis.

"Lewis . . ."

"That's not the kind of talk that's going to get favors, Lewis," rumbled his father.

"Well, she——" He looked at Lillian. She was solemnly staring at him; but now she winked, very slowly. For a moment he glared at her. "—she makes me sick," he muttered. Then he turned back to his father.

"And Pa," he said, "have you decided—have you thought of a place——"

"We're leaving that to you," his father slowly replied, his eyes still on the window. "If it's college life you want, there's Yale and Dartmouth——"

"—and—and Oxford," Lewis breathed.

"Oxford?" cried Lillian, staring at him. *"Oxford?"* She flung her head and arms back. "Oh, Lord!" she prayed. She grabbed an empty tumbler and stuck it to her eye. "Our Lewis went to Oxford, donchaknow," she drawled, "that's why he talks that way! We took out his tonsils and adenoids, and then we took out his palate and his tongue and pulled all his teeth." She swung around from one to another, gazing at them through the tumbler. "But he still talks that way," she drawled, "it can't be helped; nothing to be done about it!" She turned from her chuckling father and stared through the glass at Lewis, who glowered back at her. "You make *me* sick!" she snapped, and she slammed the tumbler on the table, got up and went out. When she reached the hall, she whirled around and stuck her head in the diningroom. *"Haw! haw!"* she bellowed, and slammed the door.

Her father watched her go out.

"Don't be a damn fool, Lewis," he muttered, still chuckling. And his mother murmured: "Oh, Lewis!"

Lewis was gazing at the tablecloth.

" . . . or the University of California," he said in a low voice. "That's a good school."

"And there's the North Pole," added his father.

"And then," murmured his mother; she was carefully drawing her fork across the tablecloth in little rectangles. "And then there's Harvard, you know."

"Harvard, Ma?" protested Lewis.

"You can get a room there, you know," she went on, without looking at him, "and you can be like you were a million miles away from—from folks." She laughed, and hastily added. "But I don't know anything about it, of course, and your father and I are leaving it entirely to you!"

"Any place within reason," his father amended. "Any place in the east. I'm not made of money, Lewis," he said, "and it will be a sacrifice as it is. But pick any place you want to, east of Chicago, and you can go there. It's up to you."

Once in his room, Lewis closed the door and gave three silent cheers and a tiger. There was Michigan, he thought, as he strode up and down the floor, and then there was Center where they were wiping up the country with their football team although they always prayed before the game started. Columbia had too many Jews, but there was Cornell with a fine track team, and he was a good runner and you could get down to New York pretty often for a good time; and there was Old Nassau, with its ivycovered walls.

That's it, he thought. Princeton or Cornell! He rushed to his desk, and grabbing his pen and paper, he hurriedly wrote a couple of requests for prospectuses.

On the night when Lewis must finally decide upon a college, he sat alone in his room, gloomily drawing designs on his desk blotter. Cornell, Princeton, Pennsylvania: none of them seemed to ring true, the thought of none of them quickened his heavy mood. And then at last a rejected name jumped into his mind: Harvard!

He sat upright and banged his fist on the desk. Harvard! that was it! If he took rooms there he would be as good as a thousand miles from home! And Harvard had good athletics, and from a point of view of scholastics and prestige it was head and shoulders

above any other school in the country, while here he could find a college life to suit his tastes!

He started drumming his fingers on the desk. And then, he thought, then I could run in town anytime and visit the shipping offices, which I wouldn't be able to do if I went to Cornell or Princeton. And after all, that was his main object: to get a ship, break away and see the world! He jumped up and started pacing the floor.

"It'll be fun dropping in on the family," he whispered as he reached the window and whirled back, "once a month or so, just as a visitor!"

Where in America would he find such a college life, and friends and such a group of famous professors! And then the quick break working his way on board a ship to Liverpool or Havre; through Gibraltar into the blue Mediterranean, to Naples, Alexandria, Port Said!

"Port Said is the wickedest city in the world," he muttered as he reached the door and swung back. "They're hanging around the wharves, just waiting for you to dock!" He would start right away to visit the shipping offices for a job next summer—and maybe if he found something good, he'd leave before school closed. "Though I really shouldn't." He reached the window, swung around, and started back. "I really ought to stick the year out at school if I can possibly hold myself back!" And he laughed out loud, while his whole body tingled.

Three days later he registered at Harvard, and the following morning he attended his first class in Economics, one day late. Seated beside the window, the notebook before him glared in the sunlight, and when he raised his eyes the forms in the room were dim in the ghostly darkness. The sounds, however, were loud, and loudest was the professor's voice, from out his dim figure.

"We have learned only one thing this morning, gentlemen; but that one thing is of primary importance, and I want you to remember it if you forget everything else—which I suppose you will do the moment you leave the classroom." Laughter. "It is the most important thing you will learn in this course in Economics. That is, that our lives, our pay envelopes, the amount we pay for butter and

ggs—everything from the annual salary of a bank president down
o the wages of the meanest laborer, is regulated by supply and
emand . . . supply and demand. . . . Men who have the ability
lus the training necessary to run a bank, are rare; therefore a hun-
red thousand a year. On the other hand, men able to do manual
abor are common; therefore, ten, twenty, thirty dollars a week. I
now that it's rather unpleasant to realize that one man can earn
ver a hundred times as much as another, but I'm afraid there's
o help for it under our present system of society—and, so far, this
s the best system we have evolved." Mutterings from a Jewish
tudent. "Later we will look into various theoretical systems that
ave been offered as a substitute for our present capitalistic society.
Jnder the present system, however, we must all admit that strikes
re useless, a waste of time and energy, with nothing to show for it,
xcept, perhaps, a few broken heads." Laughter. "Men force their
mployers to give them more money than they earn. I mean by that,
ney demand an unnatural wage, one that is not regulated by supply
nd demand—supply and demand again, you see. Their em-
loyers are forced in turn to raise the price of commodities. People
vho buy these commodities have to charge more for their services
r production in order to pay for them. Eventually, the men who
vent on strike find the cost of living higher, and are back where
ney were before—with a lot of wasted time and unnecessary suffer-
ng when they were out of work thrown in. This is what we call
ne 'vicious cycle.' We will learn more about it later. I believe that
f the workingman could be taught to understand this, and to
evote his time to agitating for legislation for better working con-
itions and less waste, we would have made a great step in a
eneral amelioration of conditions. . . . That will be all for today,
entlemen."

Lewis crossed the Yard and went out the gate to Harvard Square. His classes for the day were over, and at last he was going to make ne rounds of the shipping offices! What the hell! he thought, strid-ng past the subway entrance and heading for town on foot, hell, vhy wait till next summer to hunt for a boat; there's no time like ne present—is there, kiddo? And he smiled as he caught the eye of ne pretty little brunette.

Sunwarmed morning breezes whispered soft along the avenue Boy! he thought, just think of all the girls you're going to meet— going where it pleases you to go with no one telling you—boy He threw his head back and went striding down the street. Bom bay, Yokohama; Tokyo and Singapore! swaggering through th torchlit streets of Zanzibar at night. Shipping on a windjammer— Cape Town or Pernambuco—boy! will that be snappy! And h laughed outright. . . . Although, he added seriously, I mustn' leave before summer unless they have an unusually good job open I'm learning some mighty important things at school!

He understood about prices and wages now. He was beginnin to understand finance in general. This cosmopolitan science wa the key to the complexities of life, and he was beginning to se reason where those of the past generation saw only chaos.

He wondered if his mother could understand it. Economic lif was, to her, a blind alley to stumble along, now and then haltin to beat against the wall with one's bare fists. She didn't realize i was a neat scientific thing, to be studied and acted upon like chess game. He might explain it to her some day when he visite back home.

"There's no sense in complaining about the prices Moone charges, Ma. It's not his fault. He's helpless in the face of suppl and demand! Just so many people want beef in Belerton, and there just so much to be had. Therefore he has to charge a fixed pric for it, because . . . because. . . .

"Pa'll simply have to make a bigger individual effort, that's all!

Take the Boston policemen. They were going on strike tomorrow hoping to intimidate the city into paying them more money. The would lose out, of course. But even if they won, well, it would onl be the vicious cycle over again; the same old thing, over and ove again. . . . But they would lose, and it would be all loss, no gain loss of wages, loss of property—people said hell would break loos like it did in Liverpool, if there were no cops to protect the city.

These labor agitators would do anything, just because this is free country! They don't know how to use their liberty! If he coul only get to them he could talk as well as any foreigner! He coul

xplain to them what a foolish and wicked thing they were doing!

"Don't you realize it's just the vicious cycle, all over again?"

A stone, thrown by someone way back in the swaying crowd, truck his temple, but he pressed one hand against the wound, holdng the other up to stay the muttering people.

"It's for your good, for your country's good, that I am talking! Who cares more for you, I, one of your fellowcountrymen, who ave enough money to live on, and who don't gain anything, one vay or the other, or these paid, foreign agitators? They make money f you strike, but what difference does it make to me what you lo? They're uneducated! they hardly speak English! I'm a tudent at Harvard—only a Sophomore, I know—but I'm studying nd working to get along and to help my country, to help *you* long! What do they know about the vicious cycle?"

He leaned forward, his eyes sparkling, his breath coming hard. He gazed upon the faces of men enthralled against their will, upon yes that were slitted with hate and fear. And now he clutched ne rail and in a voice, low, clear and portentous, he hurled his inal bolt.

"What does Samuel Gompers know about the vicious cycle? about upply and demand? what does Samuel Gompers, a foreigner, aken in by us, a poor, illiterate youth, know about Americanism? *vhat does he know about, outside of bribery, blackmail of poor vorkingmen,* and SECRET CONTRIBUTIONS FROM GERMANY AND JAPAN ND OTHER ENEMY POWERS?"

A shot! a bullet sank into his side! Lewis clutched at his heart.

"There he is—that man over there—one of those agitators!" He taggered, weakening. "No, don't . . . hurt him, men . . ." His oice fell to a whisper. "Perhaps . . . he doesn't know . . . any bet-er . . ."

He sank to his knees. The sun glared down on him, spreading a loak of heat over his face and body, stretching in a dazzling heat ver the blue water. He fell on his back, arms outstretched, feeling ne thunder of the train as it rose from the subway and sped past im, bright and glistening. Across the bridge on Beacon Hill, razy red buildings, packed Chinese fashion, rose above the river, neir roofs slanting in all directions. Some of the roofs caught the

sun squarely and shone hot and vivid. And above the patchwor of heavy red and burning yellow, rose the Customs House towe colorless in the colorless eastern sky, brooding over the exoti West End.

Maybe Rome was like that, rising on its seven hills; and he'd b swinging along some bridge across the Tiber now, in the sparklin morning heat, coming from his class in an Italian university; an boy! would he be happy and carefree in beautiful surroundings lik that! Maybe he'd find some girl, some passionate Italian girl wh would give herself freely and not worry about what people think like American girls do!

"God, it'll be great!" he cried, and he swooped on a pebble an shied it at the train that glided swiftly down the incline. To sa away to a sparkling clean life, away from that filthy drabness o Belerton, that slinking around the Village like a cur, hunting fo Helen—

"Christ! how did I ever do that?" he muttered. Just becaus she fell over the fence and he tumbled on top of her, and she la very still, neither of them moving, just lying there—

"OVER THERE! OVER THERE! DEE DEE DEE, DE DEE DEE, OVER THERE—" He swung around and cla tered down the steps to the riverside. I'll hunt around the Italia companies first, he thought, I bet I find somebody in Italy, som body beautiful and pure and who doesn't care about fellows bu who'll like me!

He strode along the Esplanade, while at his side the tinkling su on the water cut into his eyes. Across the river lay Cambridg glaring at the sun, her blinding white columns rising above the har blue water to a hard azure sky, while behind her riverfront, thousand threads of smoke rose steadily, steadily, till far above the softened and floated on the breeze like the chorus of a lullab He turned and plodded up the hill, and the sunglaring cobbl stones rose to meet him. Lines of musty red brick houses behin a network of black and greenspattered branches closed him in th narrow street and laid a cool blue carpet before him beside th wider carpet of glaring yellow. Above, the golden dome of th State House swept up from the far side and disappeared behin

the clutter of roofs and chimneypots. Dark branches writhed against the gold dome . . . that rose, sheer and clear, and shone down upon him.

It was going to be wonderful to wander through Europe; he'd see so many beautiful and queer things that the people back home had never even heard about! Perhaps he'd write a book about it; they'd be mighty surprised to see his name on the cover. He was always good at themes, and if one really appreciates the beautiful, and writes simply and vividly about it, his stuff will sell like hotcakes!

"I'm a traveler and author," he told the officeboy at the steamship company, "and I want to see about getting a job on a boat. We writers get much more out of traveling that way, that's why we never go as passengers."

He reached the top of the hill, and through the sloping canyon of graystone business houses, he could see the mass of buildingtops piled against buildingtops, sloping down toward the harbor. Just below him was Washington Street, where the nearest steamship offices were located; what should he really say when he went in?

He slowed down to think it over, turning at right angles and passing under the State House. It would seem funny, his hunting for a job so long before he wanted it; he'd have to figure out exactly what he wanted to say before he called anywhere. He crossed the wide grounds before the State House and halted to let the line of automobiles pass, gazing down the slope, beyond the shining sea of rough green treetops to the glaring buildings, crowds, and glittering traffic in sunny Tremont Street below.

You don't find traffic in most cities as heavy as it is in Boston; but then, Boston is a great city. He crossed Beacon Street and slowly descended the shaded paths of the Common toward the Public Gardens.

There are one million, five hundred thousand people in Greater Boston, according to the nineteen fifteen census. That makes Boston the fourth largest city in the United States. It is about the tenth largest in the world. New York, London, Paris, Chicago, Berlin, Tokyo, Petrograd, Vienna, Philadelphia, are all larger. But then, the War probably killed off a great many people in the European cities, and Boston would climb to about fifth or sixth. London

would probably still be larger. But there would be Berlin and Vienna on the German's side and Paris and Petrograd on the Allies' side; they would never be as big again.

He reached the end of the Gardens and leaned against the iron rail at the head of Commonwealth Avenue. The avenue was five long stripes, shining in the noon sun: dull red; black; faded green; black; dull red. Fivestoried brick houses, low in the wide expanse, stretched their lines of bowed fronts like pigeonbreasted soldiers, standing in a row. In the middle, along the two rows of gritty yellowgreen trees, sat children and their nursemaids, gouty old men and bums; while in the exact center, bulky stone patriots with unpressed trousers sat in the path, staring ahead, one to a block for over a mile, marshalled by George Washington who faced them on horseback in the Gardens just behind Lewis. Along the tarred street to the left of the green, a line of automobiles, coming east, rolled along, softly and stickily, *tli-i-ish, tli-i-ish;* on the right they moved west, *tli-i-ish, tli-i-ish*. Everything was motionless; everything was quiet; save for these cars that rolled by, *tli-i-ish, tli-i-ish,* one line going west, one line coming east, like stationary machines on a moving belt.

It would be nice to have a place here, right on the corner; although the wealthiest people were moving out toward the Newtons. Still, he could have two places, a townhouse and—

He whirled around as he heard the Arlington Street Church clock strike the hour. It was noon, and people in the steamship offices would be out for lunch! He kicked back at the rail and swore. Now I'll have to kill time till one o'clock, he thought; "waste good time," he muttered, "when I might be fixing everything!" He gave another back kick, and then slowly started on, along Charles Street and into Boylston Street.

I'll explain to them I want to put my name on their list, so as to be sure of a job next summer. "I'm a student at Harvard, but if you have a really good opening, I'll take it right away. After all," he said with a bright smile, "there's more education in traveling than in all the books ever printed, isn't there!"

He sauntered down Boylston Street, into the darkness of Essex Street where the elevated road nearly touched the buildings on either

side and roofed over a tunnel that stretched out of sight. Two Chinese approached him; they wore Western shoes, but they shuffled along, their hands in their sleeves and their heads lowered like monks in reverie. Three children ran by with a jumprope; only their creamcolored skins and their narrowed eyes betrayed their race.

Hudson Street was two lines of flat red brick houses, yellowed by the sun overhead. Gilt-on-black Chinese letters glittered above the doors. One knotted treetrunk, flecked with green, leaned out from the sidewalk. He passed an open doorway, several steps above the street, where five Chinese musicians sat. Two played trumpets and a third a mandolin; one had a bell which, with a muffled stick, he . . . struck . . . and the sound was like a cowbell across a lonely meadow; the crash of a bronze drum rang against his eardrum and vibrated like a memory. The music was chromatic, sliding; it was cacophanous and rich; it was like a gorgeous barbarian princess, slipping downstairs.

Beyond, was the open door of a restaurant, and at one of the tables he could see four young Chinese. Their faces were handsome and cleancut. In one hand they held their chopsticks, moving them dexterously like knitting needles. In the other they each held a bowl of rice under their chins to catch the drippings. They talked between mouthfuls, and the tones rose and fell, the last word snapping staccato and then vibrating like the picked string of a banjo.

Feeling hungry, Lewis looked around until he found a Waldorf Lunch near Atlantic Avenue. He went in and shoved his way to the counter.

"Ham sandwich and a cup of coffee," he called.

"One ham!" chanted the waiter to the window behind him.

He looked at the sweets that lined the counter: flyspecked dishes of canned fruits, on the sides of which the sirup had hardened; bilious yellow pies and vermillion colored cakes. He chose a piece of chocolate cream pie; and when the order appeared and the waiter swung the mottled plate and dripping coffee cup across the counter, he seated himself against the wall, his dishes on the large arm of the chair.

Some day he would know the famous restaurants of Europe and the quaint outoftheway places that world travelers always talk about—and these people would still be eating in the Waldorf Lunch! But then, he thought, they probably wouldn't even care to go to Europe or visit anything interesting! He glanced around the restaurant.

A line of chairs faced his line of chairs. Across, a fat man sat hunched over the wide arm. He was pulling brutishly at a roll; then he dropped his head to suck in his coffee. He raised his eyes and gazed at Lewis with a vacant bovine stare; and while he stared, a sticky waiter rushed by, swooped down on his half-filled cup, and piled it on the heap of dishes in his arm. Everywhere was the clatter of plates, dull like the sound of bad coins, while above it rose the ring of the cash register as some diner slipped his money into the cage and departed, sticking a toothpick into his mouth and rolling it back and forth across his face like the air bubble in a spirit level, noisily sucking his teeth. The walls were lined with them; they sat back to back along the center of the room; they crouched over the arms, one to the left, one to the right, head almost touching head. They were like a chorus; their mouths moved in unison, covering a wide area of their faces; they gazed before them, chewing, chewing, chewing. . . .

It was all so dull, Lewis thought; people like that can't appreciate anything interesting. And he smiled to himself when he thought of the life ahead of him.

Lighting a cigarette, he left the restaurant and walked slowly along Atlantic Avenue, under a cutting sea breeze that was sharp with the smell of salt fish. A truck crashed along the cobblestones toward him; over it roared an elevated train, gaining on it, slowly, slowly. He inhaled the aroma of rich coffee that came on steamers from Brazil and faraway Java.

A trip to Java would be wonderful, lazing on the sunny deck; if only he had some interesting companion to go with him—somebody like her, for instance. He stopped and turned, gazing at her ankles as she hurried along toward Milk Street. If I just had some friend, he thought as he strolled on, somebody goodlooking and interesting—boy! would we have fun!

He walked along the black uneven planks of an old wharf. A tramp vessel lay on its side there. Bales of wool, bound in iron strips, were heaped on the deck, so near he could touch them; and the word *Shanghai* was painted on them. . . . This is Boston; and over there is China . . . just one step.

He sat on the edge of the wharf, dangling his legs. The water was ruffled and sluggish green. Where it caught the reflection of the sky it was flecked with clear blue. Dark purple oil, the color of old blood stains, oozed from the hulls of the ships and spread slowly.

A bright gleam, reflected from the mid-afternoon sun, caught his eye, and he looked up. A ship was moving steadily out, toward the channel. He could see the Italian flag, flying from the mast. Italy! Genoa, Naples, Venice. . . . He slumped over, his hands in his pockets, his mouth half open.

London, Liverpool; Antwerp and Marseilles; Shanghai, Calcutta. . . . "If I just had somebody," he whispered, staring out across the water, "somebody who would care about things the way I do, and who'd like me, too."

STANLEY J. KUNITZ

For the Word is Flesh

O RUINED father dead, long sweetly rotten
Under the dial, the time-dissolving urn,
Beware a second perishing, forgotten,
Heap fallen leaves of memory to burn
On the slippery rock, the black eroding heart,
Before the wedged frost splits it clean apart.

The nude hand drops no sacramental flower
Of blood among the tough upthrusting weeds.
Senior, in this commemorative hour,
What shall the quick commemorate, what deeds
Ephemeral, what dazzling words that flare
Like rockets from the mouth and burst in air?

Of hypochondriacs that gnawed their seasons
In search of proofs, Lessius found twenty-two
Fine arguments, Tolet gave sixty reasons
Why souls survive. And what are they to you?
And, father, what to me, who cannot blur
The crystal brain with fantasies of Er,

Remembering such factual spikes as pierce
The supplicating palms, and by the sea
Remembering the eyes I hear the fierce
Wild cry of Jesus on the holy tree,
Yet have of you no syllable to keep,
Only the deep rock crumbling in the deep.

Observe the wisdom of the Florentine
Who, feeling death upon him, scribbled fast

To make revision of a deathbed scene,
Gloating that he was accurate at last.
Let sons learn from their lipless fathers how
Man enters hell without a golden bough.

Promise Me

Only, when I am sudden loss
Of consequence for mind and stair,
Picking my dogged way from us
To whom, recessive in some where
Of recollection, with the cross
Fallen, the breast in disrepair:

Only, when loosening clothes, you lean
Out of your window sleepily,
And with luxurious, lidded mien
Sniff at the bitter dark,—dear she,
Think somewhat gently of, between
Love ended and beginning, me.

Mens Creatrix

Brain, be ice,
A frozen bowl of thought,
Pure radius of the marble eye
That is time's central spot:
In cold eternal calm
Chasten the trembling thigh.

Brain, brain:
Be fever's sepulcher,
Entomb the noise of frightened blood,
That man may strictly hear

The truthful pulse of beauty
Beyond this evil good.

Mental womb,
Intelligence of tight
Precision: He comes, the sudden Lord,
A rhythmic Spike of Light,
To cleave you with that spike:
Himself, His flowing Word.

Strike, O Poem, Strike!

Strange Calendar

Considered by the logical brief clock
That keeps no reckoning of blood's unreason,
I cannot board your minute at the dock
Of this perpetual departure; I cannot wake
Beside your name, for having welcomed light in a later season.

Suppose my punctual hat should not arrive
Tonight at that known corner where the eyes
Expect: if you should stand engraved with love
Until through annuals of space I came to wive
Your precarious dear doom—suppose, My Early One, suppose—

Or even should your bashful feet have fled,
Yet one of me, arrived, shall pace the square;
And one of me shall watch your not mine bed,
Breathing upon your sleep; another shall have laid
Himself in the revolving rock and, ageless, wait you there.

Promenade on Any Street

He passes through the crowd,
Inimical and proud.

Beneath the shifting sky
He bears young majesty,

A secret crown of stars
Among the whistling cars.

Under his springing heels,
Cleft shadow-roots, he feels

The massive planet turning.
Through pinioned heaven burning

Marches his eager head,
Seeking, as light runs red,

A virginal release
From motion, April peace;

While muddy feet patrol
The carpet of a soul

That falls like snow between
The mob and the machine.

None hears his heart cry, Stop!
None takes his echo up.

Beneath his grey felt hat
Leaps thought, the acrobat.

Lovers Relentlessly

Lovers relentlessly contend to be
Superior in their identity:

The compass of the ego is designed
To circumscribe intact a lesser mind

With definition; tender thought would wrest
Each clean protective secret from the breast;

Affection's eyes go deep, make morbid lesion
In pride's tissue, are ferocious with possession;

Love's active hands insistently caress
The quivering body of shy loveliness,

Hands that are desperately moved to own
The subtly reasoned flesh on branching bone;

Lovers regard the simple moon that spills
White magic in a garden, bend their wills

Obliquely on each other; lovers eat
The small ecstatic heart to be complete;

Engaged in complicate analysis
Of passionate destruction, lovers kiss;

In furious involvement they would make
A double meaning single. Some must break

Upon the wheel of love, but not the strange,
The secret lords, whom only death can change.

Rape of the Leaf

Watered by light, this done catastrophe
Was written in the seed. Who shall condemn
My wintry hand for leaping in a tree
To tear a tender pattern from its stem?

I swear no malice pulled the mental string
Of fate's deflowering arm. I count it grief
To contradict the buds, to murder spring
In summer's blood, by this lone crumpled leaf.

All shade, all greenness, rolled into a ball,
Are prisoners of my palm. And shall I let,
Like autumn, vegetation's empire fall,
Or stay the curve of time, so to forget

The imminence of God's great roving eye?
Electric of my heart, we cannot shun
That fatal stare. But while the buzzards cry,
Wear not a scarlet jacket in the sun.

Second Birth

Now art thou big with sorrow, not with seed,
That came forth bloody once. Avert thine eyes,
Thou dolorous, from this unnatural strife,
That in their bitter pits he may not read
His cruel treason. O bury thy soft cries.
This child, whose arrogant cold lip intones,
Has cut love's central cord to enter life,
Delivered from thine old and tired bones.

In a Strange House

The memory of time is here imprisoned
In these walls, not fluent time that moves
Upon the flood, but time already reasoned
And undone of its quick eyes and loves.

We who are strangers in this finished house
Have slept with noiseless shadows, and we lie
Astonished in our chambers lest we rouse
The sleeping moments with an awful cry.

The dead would murder action. Oh I know
Their subtle ways. They separate with fear
The fiery lips of thought. And I shall go
By silent lanes and leave you timeless here.

The Green Fly

The pale boy leans upon the sand,
Intently pondering
The green fly buzzing in his hand:
He plucks each brittle wing.

By legs pulled from the body's wall,
By slow paralysis,
He knows earth's creatures are as small
And frangible as this;

For curious eyes, exempt of hate,
Glitter again, again,
To watch like God the intricate
Anatomy of pain;

Fastidious hands in minute quest
Will break the frail bright elf;
But he will be the cruelest
When turned upon himself.

Who Tears the Serpent from the Flesh

Its evil head that gnaws the breast
Is beautiful and bright,
Emblazoned with a jeweled crest,
Red plume of light.

The body of its reptile grace,
Glitter of gold and green,
Winds rippling in fastidious chase
Of heart's meat clean.

Who tears the serpent from the flesh
To stamp a bloody seal,
And laughs, inflicting gash on gash
With his iron heel,

Will thirst to fill in spirit's drought
The vacant well of pain,
And stoop to kiss the serpent's mouth,
And kiss in vain.

Remembered

Each day we bury it again
Under the slow débris
Of life that mantles last year's pain
With sifting memory.
Hands blossom in this lucid air;
A long bright rain of eyes,
Feet falling on a hollow stair,
New circumstances, cries,

Combine their casual descents,
Stuffing the moment deep
Beneath deposits of events
And equal blanks of sleep,
Until it is quite dead, quite dead
At last. But shadows churr
Like beetles in a lonely head,
Repeating, Remember?
(Violets springing in the park . . .
The red bird and the blue
Among the elms . . . a shy remark . . .
Youth strolling, two by two . . .)
And suddenly, by sequent thought
Led backward from odd themes,
We touch, incredible, a spot
Of quivering grief. It screams.

Litany for a Poet

Let me not be given,
A sight of Heaven,
For blackened are the eager eyes
That look on Paradise.

Offer me no meaning
That intervening
Between the darkness and the light
Will make the sun less bright.

Save me from contentment,
But spare my resentment
Against the uninhabited,
The large uneaten dead.

Teach this heart to suffer,
And make it tougher
To withstand the slow outrageous fire
Of mammalian desire.

Keep my soul to ravage,
O keep it savage,
Preserve it lean with hungering.
So may the lone bird sing.

MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

Ballad of the Hangman's Widow

The hangman's widow
  Lay in her bed,
Her life was a shadow,
  Her heart seemed dead,

Her will was a slave
  To the man she had married
Now stiff in his grave
  And three days buried.

The pain of thinking
  Throbbed in her brain
As she stared unwinking
  Toward the window-pane.

Why had she chosen
  A man she hated
For his heart, cold-frozen,
  And his hands, ill-fated?

She tried to remember
  And waited for the dawning
Of a cold November
  Rainy morning.

Then just outside
  There loomed in the darkness
Where rain fell wide
  A shape of utter blackness.

She saw with amazement,
  Peering in the room
A head at the casement
  Dark against the gloom.

With frightened tingling
  Her neck grew colder,
A black rope was dangling
  Around his shoulder!

He pushed back the shutter
  And leaned in staring.
What did it matter,
  She was past caring.

He peered from the window-frame,
  He pushed back the curtain,
He leaped into the room
  On feet light and certain,

The while, unblinking,
  The hangman's bride
Watched him slinking
  To her low bedside.

When he leaned over
  She knew his face,
One hanged by her lover
  In the market-place,

And she asked from her pillows:
  "What are you bringing
From the wet, windy gallows
  Where you hung swinging?"

"From midnight till three
  I am free of the gallows,"

Said the stranger, "but see
How my black rope follows!

"The hangman knotted
The noose on my throat,
His hand has rotted
But the rope won't rot.

"Beneath my curse
I watched him sicken
From worse to worse,
He was sorely stricken.

"The hangman died,
I caused his dying,
But the rope he tied
There's no untying."

"Then why haunt me,"
Asked the hangman's widow,
"Who am not free
From the fear of his shadow?"

He said: "This noose
You can untwist,
You must unloose
What he made fast,

"Close to your body
His ghost still lingers
To hold your heart steady
And strengthen your fingers."

She touched her hands
So slender and thin,
She felt steel bands
Beneath the soft skin.

She clasped in fright
  Her hands together.
The skin, so white
  Felt tough as leather.

Her wrists were stone,
  Her tiny knuckles
Grew bulging bone
  Like iron buckles.

She lay in the dark
  As frail as a flower
While her hands grew stark
  With deadly power.

She bent those cruel
  Crooked fingers
Warped by the fuel
  Of a dead man's angers.

"I lived in fear
  Of his hands," she said,
"Now I have them here
  Though the hangman's dead.

"They are mine tonight,
  They must do my will
Though filled with the might
  Of the hangman still!"

He knelt by her side,
  She felt his breath,
"You are cold," she cried,
  "With the chill of death!"

Then the stranger said:
  "If I lie on your arm

In the hangman's bed
I shall soon be warm!"

"So let it be,"
Said the hangman's widow,
"I would win free
From the fear of his shadow!"

Her voice grew mellow,
"Come lay your head
On the empty pillow
Of the hangman's bed!"

He laid his length
By the hangman's bride;
She felt dark strength
Flow out of her side.

A moment passed,
Then she turned to cope
With the knot tied fast
In the gallows rope,

But the gnarly hands
Knew their own life,
Not the commands
Of the hangman's wife.

And the fingers twirled
A snaky knot
That smoothly curled
Round her slim throat,

And the rope bit deep
Beneath her chin
As though to keep
Her soft breath in.

Her body strove
  With piteous fright
But the hangman's love
  Still bound her tight.

Dark grew her face
  Against the cover
In the last embrace
  Of her dead lover,

And the rope bound two
  Who silent lay
Till the first cock crew
  At the break of day,

Then the noose grew slack
  Without a sound,
And the rope curled back,
  And the knot unwound,

And the stranger fled
  As still as a shadow
From the haunted bed
  Of the hangman's widow

Whose small hands flung
  Across the white pillow
Limply hung
  All frail and sallow.

EVELYN SCOTT

Ships In Port

Out beyond Sandy Hook,
Beyond anywhere,
Footless caravans are creeping in
On the moving desert.
Along the farthest, blue rim of the world,
Lines of black camels hump themselves,
Lift fleecy backs, and stagger . . .
It is to the lean, horn-bright voices of my sirens
That I listen.
They are calling from the docks.
Whistles storm against space.
Clouds are flags.
The bleak, immobile eyes of oracle
Flash jaunty on the twilit sky.
Vultures for the stale air of the quays,
My ships,
Verminous with men,
Are as clean to the wind,
As the immortals.
Already,
Above the jostling shadows of the rootless trees,
They have carved,
In polar rainfall under moons,
In wounds vanishing in beauty
Far behind,
Bare poems,
Written in milk, ice, diamond, cerulean.
From the pent city,
In summer,
Where people are like frogs in drought,

Maybe an etiolated thought
Will follow the reserved trails that lead outward,
Losing them forever,
With the gulls,
At the first stilted buoy.

Chopin's Grave Revisited

Little boys are tramping home from school.
Little girls are tripping home from school,
With nursery governesses.
It is raining.
The trees lurch and huddle in a silver torment
Up and down the street.
In the suburban parlour,
Behind clean curtains, polished windows, and pots of aspidistras,
Katie, in a frock also new and clean,
Practices her mazurka,
Lofty with its beauté du diable,
The mazurka stamps on its lamb's feet,
Keeps the pace of Katie's metronome.
The poplars in the garden wail louder than Chopin's chords.
Katie's pig-tails swing,
As she persists to time,
And sturdily regards the rhythm and the rhyme.
Katie's playing in the firelight is food for a lean belly.
An odor of nursery teas and damp linen burdens the air.
How innocent the clouds that lie
Like sooty bruises on the foggy London sky,
On short November afternoons.

A Portrait

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children
Unto the third and fourth generation,"
The old lady said.

She was grave, of course,
Watching me with her brown eyes,
Cocking her head like a wren,
Settling her spectacles higher
On her small, veined nose,
Giving me that stare from nowhere
Which will pass for awful sternness if one does not think.

O, Lamb of God,
I thought,
She taketh away the sins of the world,
For verily she hath no sins.
How can she speak of hell who has never seen hell?
Nor has she seen heaven, either,
O, Lamb of God.

My old lady has seen the way the cloth should be laid on Sunday,
Has seen the quantities of sugar that the vicar takes:
But surely she has not seen hell?
How then, Lamb of the Almighty,
Can she prophesy?
For a prophet is a man—or woman—
Who is nailed to a cross.
A prophet is a man—or woman—
Who has been tempted by the brighter vision
Of a world outspread,
And has rejected it.
But this old lady—
Why she has never burned her fingers under the tea cosy!
O, Lamb of God,
If I may say so, Lamb of God,
She's much too innocent to ever be a saint.

Snow

The furred, brown trees,
On the grey sky,
Suggest frail patterns on the wings of moths.
An ivory dew is in the air.
The soundless dray horse wears a silver comb.
There are the mouse-steps of the passersby
Across the silvery ash.
The world is morbid sculpture that was moulded
In a lightning flash.
There are infant garlands on the rosebushes.
Surely the great elms are a young orchard.
The giants are like stalk of wintry fern.
As if the leaves grew feathers,
Down clings, and to the very icicles.
Among the wool catkins I walk,
Eyes fringed with the torn white flesh,
With crystal.
In the park,
The forests spread the tattered, frosty wings of angels,
Bleached in great fans,
The dead coral.
At evening,
There is a paper universe,
In which nothing lives but a bluish shadow.
Under the arc lamps,
The gradual flood descends steadily
Its rainbow particles.
To this core
All accumulating darkness pivots,
Quickens with infinity . . .
There is silence.

Memories of a Season

i

Under the thistledown crags,
The white ramparts of heaven,
In blue too pure to be answered by anything but tear
In glistered twilight
Dolphin waters stride along the beach,
Striking from the sands
A miracle of fog-pale crests.
Winds stridulate.
The one star flake,
Stainless to the mists,
Trembles . . .

A moon,
Lean as tallow,
Strokes with lightning
Each pondered wave,
Flattering space with such motion
As angels might use to embrace the earth;
While there pours over,
Between me and the sunken flame,
A torrent clear as burning honey.

ii

On days
When the dead confusion of other people's thoughts,
Clutters an alive mind,
One meditates
As in the débris of an autumn forest.
For even the tiniest flash of emerald from the dee
mould,
Be grateful!

But when,
Along the front at evening,

I evade the paralytic tentacles of pier,
Where waves steam in their limp descent
On agate murk of shingle,
And boats,
In bannered lamps—
The miracles of children—
The stern moon presses me.
My life rises with her,
Tingling,
To meet her nacreous life.

iii

The moon,
Bleak and thoughtful on the dark water,
Scalds with milk
Beaches; heavy, urgent waves,
Each swollen to meet its time,
Not one before the hour.
Over the deathrattle of shingle,
Out of platinum caves,
Mercurial curlings about submerged rocks,

The august fountains of the spume
Leap to fringe heaven.
White violence streams from the shadow.
A black mirror is breathed on
By disaster grown immeasurable.
In the preying midnight,
Towers of sleep rise.
Stone-locked serpents hiss.
Under an immense gossamer,
Worlds are stirring;
Desert pricks of stars,
Seeding a waste.

I am old tonight.
I listen to the mummy sounds.

The Drowned Mother

Maybe the hurrying feet I heard,
As I sprang,
Were those of a child.
Maybe the little sounds following—
Maybe those were the footsteps of a child.
Did he run?
Has he tried to reach me?
Should I have turned,
Even as I leapt,
Glanced over my shoulder,
And given him the signal to follow?
Would he have thought better of it afterward
Had he crossed the long foam,
The white, wicked fields?
I might have called to him
And told him the truth.
I might have said:
Child, this is peace.
This is the long whisper under currents,
The roar in the shell.
When the wind races clean away from you
And vanishes on the bright sky,
It tells you no more.
Here the black tides of night,
With their breath of alabaster,
Pursue us no more.
We are at rest.
Give your little heart to me,
In my cold hand.
It will never be in safer keeping.
Under the grey-fleshed moon,
The forests of the seaweed are floating,
Quietly.

Waves crawl gently in their wreaths of mourning.
My tears have added only a little more salt
To those already shed.
Creep to the beach in the early morning.
Find some trace of me you will remember—
Hat—shoes—a stocking.
Steep yourself in this which has succeeded the other.
Lave your youth.
Grow strong, merry, confident.
Run away again.
Forget.
Always,
Here,
Safe in my coral fingers that are bone and iron,
Your little heart will beat securely,
Pulsing like a little sea thing,
That must warm the two of us.

The Splendid Sky

From the apple-pink east,
To the west, and the cloudy forests of the rain,
Was ten centuries.
From the circle scurfed with mist
Where the sun,
Looking at tomorrow,
Saw its own reflection,
Was another ten centuries.
There is a sea that is nine-hundred fathoms deep.
But the blue in the zenith
Took a million million years to make.
It was filled with such redolence of winds
As have blown from polar bitterness to polar bitterness
Through human time.
Tattered lace hurricanes rested over all the lakes of the globe,
In crimson frost, nightmare purple.

Even birds,
Twitching by,
Very high up,
Seemed to take their way,
Like tiny boats,
Knowing very little about the Elysian Fields;
The ruin of fire and glass;
The millenium promised
Out of blazing indigo
And welts rosy as sores.

Expanses dwindled.
Under the embankment,
Trains, milking the fog,
Steamed by slowly.
Unmindful of the fifty thousand molten rose-petals scorching heaven,
Little boys,
On a grass common,
Where the green was fresh as cinnamon,
Shouted,
Played cricket.
Everything under the sky was very homely.
Nothing seemed to last long.

I was glad.
I have said to myself,
Death haunts me.
Now, gazing at the precious signs,
And again finding beauty so much more than I can bear,
Life haunts me.

The Young Courtesan Speaks

I AM tired of lovesongs.
Lilith, Sister of the Serpent's Breath,
Give lovers death.
I am tired of the various forms
That are my seeming,
In their hot dreaming.
The youth I have is not for long.
I will not give it to their song.

Aphrodite,
Drag man seaward in your veil.
Make his shroud of all the glittering milleniums.
I would give him a thorn that would pierce his sleep
Where pain is deep.
If he touch me,
Let him find me cold.
Let me wither to a grimace at his gaze.
Let me be old.
I am tired of the heated searching that ignores me,
Explores only its own soul,
And finds a heap of ash.
I give him my embrace.
He will not see my face.

I will sear his heart with my own burning,
Or, while I lie,
Prone to his eagerness like leaden earth upon my longing,
I will die.
Let misery, sickness, rotting age
Come over him,
As darkness creeps upon those growing blind.
Kill his pride.
Let him lose all that he may find all.
Mary, make him kind!

Light Fog Over London

Little white lambs wander
In the bleating air,
Among dark cypresses.
Sirens, far away on the river,
Sometimes repeat
The mournful bleat.
Little lambs stagger under all the sins
Of people living anywhere between The Temple
And Nottinghill Gate,
And much farther.
More and more chill,
More and more melancholy,
Weaker and weaker,
The whistles blearing
All the world of hearing.
Traffic is stopped,
Because of the press,
The reckless, wooly guilelessness.
A lamb has died.
The feeble blanching has begun to lift.
But there's still a halo shining
Where mire-stained creatures have squatted
With knees flexed under bleeding bosoms.
There are no trams, no taxis and no buses.
There is no tread of passerby.
Just small, trembling, anæmic ghosts
That stumble on
Through a city hushed
For a lamb to die.

WALLACE GOULD

To Emily

THE beans are luscious, Emily. Was it you
who baked them, really you?

I came tonight
to eat with you alone, and, as it were,
to eat the brownbread hot, virginly hot,
thus that the cold young butter melt at once,
with sidling down the sweet perspiring slice,
and both, alike enamoured, be seduced
together, with no obvious regret,
and certainly without reproach from me,
for dotingly I love the logical,
with all that should be hot, hot, and with all
that might perforce or even perchance be cold—
compliant.

I have always felt a dread
of being present at the family board—
of thus partaking of our sacred loaf
grown clammy with exposure to the dour
composite draft of piety and air
which old New England breathes maternally
to lay unwanted warmth and give to all
a windy balm for burnings deep within,
no matter what the fuel, where the fire,
or when the warning of an holocaust—
and even to those who dine a duple dole
for all who suffer with the prurient heat
of palatal predilection.

I have said—
and yet not quite enough.

For I deplore
seeing the racial sacrifice left stark
and sodden on the altar, for the want
of ready hands to serve the mellowed maize
before the chill comes on, a sacrilege
too subtle for the wits of those who pray
protractedly to what you call the Eclipse
whom they call Father.

I have waited long
to come when I might find you quite alone—
O loneliest of all our lonely people—
I have waited to be alone with you
as one would wait all day for eventide
and the first peal of the early vesper bell,
that he might enter church before the rest,
to kneel alone before the shrine, and there
address the loneliest deity of our three—
to hail her, asking humbly for the strength
to face the holy solitude of self.
I am catholic to the fingertips.
I hail you as my virgin patroness.
I make each bean an Ave Emily.
I do not trifle now, nor do I scoff—
I am too true a Yankee.

Emily,
did you possess the strength of which I speak?
Or did you weary, falter, and succumb,
living without the secret will to live—
the monstrance borne without the holy host?
When in the fall you watched the waterfowl,
ah, did you never plan a flight to Egypt,
or, as you would today, to Florida? Bosh, Emily—

Why did you not kiss him even once? Or even let him take you
and fly?
For thus I spill the beans. I came tonight to say this very thing.
I could spank you, Emily, even as I spank the table.
Why did you fly alone from Philadelphia? Why did you not fly
with your lover—

somewhere into the somewheres over the edge of the world?
For was he not your lover, Yankee, was he not your lover?
You could have sung of him. You could have given us all that
Sappho gave.
You could have been our Sappho. Could Sappho have been silent
of her lover?

You could have sung the love songs of our racial dawn. Ah, but no,
you gave us epigrams in rhythm, saws that the town wag could have
uttered—
such as dull critics and lazy poets favor, for the sake of having
something on hand to serve as food for thought with which to glut
a public

ever agape for what to eat, no matter what, even as with us
the dull and the lazy favor the use of canned beans. And, besides,
your lovely songs, your children, you neglected, giving them no
guidance
toward creditable maturity. You loved all children save your own.

You were a born mother, but, with the deadly will of a Yankee,
you fought fecundity itself. You exposed your children to the
death—
you even denied existence to the lovelier ones that might have been.
You aborted the seed that was given to you at Philadelphia. I could
spank you—

For do you realize, child, that never once
has any poet of our own rare blood
cried out, at least beyond the bedroom door,

and all unblushingly, unflinchingly——
"I love you?"

I myself would have uttered thus,
when, having said, I should have told the truth,
but long before my clumsy pen was poised
love had burned out, its anthracitic embers
all having turned to ashes, which, in time,
thoroughly sifted, sorted, carefully rid
of all the useless bleach and dust of death,
were frugally reserved for banking fires
of energy, or ambition, for the night——
a long New England night of wintry hate.

Who was there left to give that classic cry?
Who of today could do it?

Edwin, Robert——
either one would rather be caught naked
than heard to make such utterance.

Amy, Edna——
one preferred hounds to beaus, preferred soft pillows
to soft flesh, and the other burns her candles
now no more for the silly thing called self,
at both ends, as it were, and now no more
to light the simpering countenance of love,
only to make a setting for a scene
resounding with an amourous litany
discarded by all good iconoclasts;
but now a proselyte to panacea,
a mater dolorosa to the mob,
our Edna, runic princess of the land——
with having found her soul, or some such thing——
not only lights her tapers, but parades
adown the common thoroughfares of mind,
exclusively for martyrs all the mode,

and to illume the dark ways of the law,
impersonating thus, but none too well,
the Bedloe woman walking in her sleep.
Now can you understand such carrying on?
I wish the little minx would set aside
her tallow toys and light her midnight oil,
and work, ignoring microcosmic spleen
for transcendental macrocosmic sense——
the heritage of poets of the blood.
Instead, the little madcap will ignore
her own Parnassian birthright.

I could spank her——
and should, if I but knew her.

Ah, but you——
you could have uttered that eternal cry
just as it is, virile, simple, direct,
and thus have given voice to Yankee love
with all its native jest, its classic force,
its transcendental plainness. You alone
could have uttered it convincingly.

What now——
and why do I not mind my own affairs?
I am too true a Yankee. I have said.
The beans are luscious, Emily. Give me more.

LINCOLN FITZELL

Evolution

1

In stern disorder of the crags
Are lonely faces, harsh and wild,
North-towers to the broken slags,
Below in dark confusion piled.

The graven mouth, the storm-wet brow,
Reveal the iron of the breast;
Where neither God nor man may plow
The thunder spreads its purple crest.

Though on the sleeping head is hurled
The hail-hard stone, the pitted lance,
Yet all clouds gathered in the world
Serve but to light the stubborn glance.

The outward symbol of its birth,
Of subterranean toil and shock,
The granite lineament of earth
Writ on the stone completes the rock.

2

In such enduring, silent, land,
Pilgrims sometimes take their stand
To curse the rock that blocks the hand,
From making green things grow—

And many a soul is stubborn-set,
With rock at bottom, and will yet
Defend what it had best forget,
To make the green things grow.

I knew a lad whose spirit smote
Temple-high within his throat,
Passionate but still remote
From living he would go—

And when swift beauty took his rest,
It was as if a stealing death
Had laid a silence on his breath,
And he would never know—

How, underneath the stubborn stone,
The docile flesh, the unearned bone,
Beauty walked, too weak alone
To make the green things grow.

3

From the scarf and ragged past,
From the blood of rock repair,
In the wind and changing vast
Sea-assault that shoulders bear,
Comrade, I shall find you there.

Though trouble of the desert beast
Night upon the thought constrains,
Yet granite, to the fired East,
Face to the undefended plains,
Comrade, we shall weigh our pains.

Though abyss of the sea confronts,
Mirage and water-sand confound,
Thunder that the reef-stone blunts,
Makes of the breast a common ground,
And heart on desert shores, the sound.

Space, that shows the earth between,
Mocks your footstep on the stair;
But the great wind-voices lean
Where the planet-rock is bare,
On the names inscribèd there.

CARY ROSS

Actually: a Poem for Mimi

(on skiing)

Here there are red arms like squirming eels
And the night is bright blue like incredibility;
Break egg shells on the shore of the snow
And spatter the blue sky with busted fire-works.

Winsomeness scarcely covers oblivious rocks;
Endeavor is as futile as love:
The deep furrows where the king of the Finns passed with his reindeer
Are alone scintillant with sparklets.
He is lost in the horizon of ice.

The old trilogy of the white earth, the Finn God
Is frozen on the hard slats of the Northern Lights:—
Over beyond the points of exclamation
The amorphous shadows of the sun are still swimming.

Marvel enough at the fish in the winter:
The green that is more brilliant than Roman Candles
Spits endlessly purple fire.

JAMES HENRY SULLIVAN

Full Levant

Far seeing eyes
Gaze back thru smoky centuries
And looking time full in the face
Place fourteen careful dimensions on a broken city

Once to the East
A king sat in a stone chair
And watched his shadow mark the days
On a circumspect cluster of temples

And when he beckoned
The Ægean cast up the reflection of his arm
A civilization respected that mirrored muscle
And sent white perfect bodies into a labyrinth

You will say however
Of the bones under that chair
Here is a man sitting on a century
Whose skeleton is just being delivered

But the Ægean
Nibbling with its single under-jaw
Does not speak
Yet it might call itself the essence of all water

Canyon City

ARCHITECTURE is buried in the ground but in the architect's mind the finality of its three pictural dimensions is a procession of solids walking up Form Street.

What is the plastic volume of a pail of white paint.

What is the pulse of the brick layer.

Where are the owner's children.

Samples of borings in little glass bottles, steam, electricity, all the metals and mechanical statuary in the boiler room.

Here we come, M. Angelo, cast, forged and wrought.

Elevators, soil pipes, windows, various people, various ideas, headaches, mistakes and conversation in a tinted room where no work is to be done.

Precedent, Stanford White, Rome, Richardson, Boston, frost, engineers, door checks and evening clothes.

Put them all together they spell concrete and stand straight and be lithe and be young and be this and be that.

Be Greece, be me, be these people, be a grasshopper, be a pinnacle, be a tentacle and remind the man with gray hair of something he saw in Africa.

Is it your feet or neck that is in the ground, or where is the ground, or is it just me. And exactly who is your shadow.

There was a farmer in Michigan who once observed that the shadow cast by his apple tree was that of a pear tree. Pear and apple, these things are not Architecture.

Architecture is that section of space where man has cut into the solid and put up a retaining wall.

KATHLEEN TANKERSLEY YOUNG

City Without Images

THERE was a wall about him:
And a blinded city within:
No yellow suns had been there:
Only wall and a stone: within
Only wall and stone against sharp air:

There was an autumn:
I remember how it came:
All the air was brilliant where
Apple trees showered crimson:
But nothing was the same:

I remember now: tide's goings
And darkness without light:
Everywhere the darkened shore,
Everything was wrapped in night:
Brilliance was no more:

I remember trees were blowing
Deep in their yellow leaf:
And turning and then snowing,
Plowing the images under,
Burying the images underneath:

There was an autumn:
I can quite remember
How all bright mornings came:
Yellow lay on the fields:
But nothing was the same:

There was a wall about him:
And a blinded city within:
No yellow suns had been there:
Only wall and a stone: within
Only wall and stone against sharp air.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

Toxins

I

. . . How in the night come the cruel possessions
of fear, wrath, crime, infection. Weighted
with history, and clad in beast's skins, one stands
in the dim Roman suburb ready to dance,
ready to howl, to run at things bound to stakes.
Here on this face known to be a friend's
let blows rain, with the whole heart given;
though weeping for foundered ties so dissolved!

It is a child's face, crushed.
Once it was
sensitive and fair and frivolous! A slant smile
takes flight as the rushing implement
unthinking falls.
And is there time to turn on other shapes,
thickly renewed, that people the hideous dark?—

* * * * * * *

Revive from the fever pillow reiterating:
"The brotherhood of men may be the loveliest of things!"
Their eyes follow on all sides, imponderable voices
whose tenderness solicits everywhere,
presences in the blot of trees along this wall.
O hollow, O loneliest and leaning form,
whose steps give no echo.
Now move upon a light
wavering across a lawn; enter a silent house,
up closeted stairs with muffled feet; and then
with faithless hands try the old reed-notes.

Sing, to sing, to have sung, to sing again!

Come sleep, madame of usurious price, . .
you teasing bawd, get me a weary-bed—

2

Although I love
unremittingly,
the frown of rebuff
may turn this lava
straightly to caught stone.

The averted glance freezeth
the rich beating of blood:
I go touring the sides of the hills;
my companion is anger.
I am not humbled; I am mutilated.
O my friendships, o young intoxications.

3

In the tides of the street
I am grateful to move,
neither better nor below
this swimming mass.

Where you cannot find me.

When the quick storms beat us we flow
damply underground; or in the sun
we march, oozing our collective sweat.
Here in the public palaces, blind hands
have built, we may loiter coolly
under the pale, concave ceilings,
under the sign of our invisible stars.

O anonymous loves of the rush-hour!
The racked body merged with an African body,
the eyes gripped to other's, sultry eyes;

or, at the green mouth of the kiosk
mounting to the air, a maiden seen
whose limbs draped with light, whose yellow hair
send the arrow of ecstasy!
Wonderfully absorbed I have followed messages:
a dancer threading the ringing armor of cars;
a birdman soaring to the top of the pencil tower,
as the chanting city leaped from my brain
through falling windows.

Night has come,
and to the glare of profuse rainbows
in the unresting ocean bottom of sounds
my body has slowly drowned without surprise.

4

Vital and composite flower:
the sentient film spreads to embrace
those sharp edges, those hollow interiors—
and is discomfited!
Yet through closed lids,
on the last ghostly iris, one could have seen
how the rhythmic light beat intolerable measures
and breathed its curtain of chain which, turning in a void,
offers the undying shape of certain faces.

HELEN PEARCE

Alabaster Flowering

The chisel's edge has cut from mighty mass
A shadowed bulk as malleable as clay,
Has smoothed wide doors through which our light can pass;
Its fine-made soul can speak with night or day.
Even the moon, aloof and wandering one,
Allows itself ensnarement with this grace,
And through the warming nights its globe looks down
Guarding this treasure with benignant face.

Low in the high gloom's green small perfect flowers
Unfurl their musical brightness from the mould,
Stitching the godless silence through hushed hours
That now forget, or have not known, the world.
The fibred moss runs green on the shell's rim,
Near the unbudded rose cold stone is nerved
With purple age, and poised above the brim
Of white, cleft feet are delicately curved.

Winged with the wind's lift on the roaming blue,
Treading the upper branches of the pine,
A summer-slippered majesty glides through
Imposing moulder and obscure design,
Trifles the locks of staid and sombre halls,
Sleeps in the fountain's ceaseless silver thread,
Fuses etched brass with mingling laugh, and smiles
In the winged nostril of a marble head.

Still Life

Here are violets, pure and cool,
Poised and strange as a pale bird's note,
White as almonds, with icy breath,
Pencilled green in each open throat;
Firm as stone chiselled paper-thin,
Set against night in their transient strength,
Their stems are supple as mermaid's hair
And glassy bubbles spot their length.

And here, in arrogance coiled and frail
On a spine-like stem, the bleeding-heart
Has burst in joy with a frosted flange
To force its perfect lobes apart;
Suspended by a thread of green,
Struck by the hand, its fleshy bell
Filled with a music from the earth,
Clacks faintly like a beetle's shell.

Adonais

The nightingale, the field-mouse, and the snake
Are yours: the evil owl and the lark.
None, stirring on the noisy earth, can make
A sound, profound or poignant, through your dark.
Yet here and now, the leaves break through your words
Bright to the fruit you caught in your thought's mesh,
Although a century, with snow and birds,
Makes one with sand the unresponding flesh.

Now your smooth tapered bones are powdered white
Frail in the earth from which your fierceness came,
And poets, in the reminiscent night,
Cherish your single-syllabled lost name.
And who would wish to have prolonged the breath
Of one who is so beautiful in death?

LEON SRABIAN HERALD

Portrait of a Lady

(for Elizabeth Ames)

The serenity of the fields and their mother horizon
Nestles in the cup of your face,
The golden grace of a thousand wheatfields
Is framed in your face
As myriads of birds frame themselves
In the fields to receive sustenance.
The stems of your speech, the grains of your laughter
Yield to us as bread from the fields
Is yielded to the hungering harvesters.

Come upon us, daily come upon us
With the waves of the wheatfields,
Come upon us who wait for you
With the love of the laborers.
Come upon us with your rhythms
And let us whisper to you, behind you,
As laborers whisper to the plentiful fields.
Give us all you have, all you are
And receive this signature of our perspiration.

The snow of separation and distance is in the air.
Soon we will leave you fallow.
We will submit to the winter, but not poorly:
The granaries of our hearts
Are filled with the wheat of your serenity,
The bread of your presence has become songs in our veins.

Perversity

Out of its blood
I could paint *batiks* for your shoulders,
And a lasting pair of red slippers for your feet
Out of the rind of this heart of mine;
Out of your loveliness
I could make sails of Time.
But you tell me in a singing voice,
"Best I became the mistress
Of a well-to-do somebody
To free myself from the routine of work!"
Say something else, beloved, with nonchalance,
Spit in the chalice of my heart,
It will be as rain to a caked land.
I can make sacrament
Even of a lovely girl's spittles.

Promise never to tell him
But for his money
You would love a poet any hour of the day.

Analysis

(for Mildred)

Reach up to turn on the light.
(to dust out the dark
and rearrange your thoughts?)
The swinging chandelier—
to mock and show your worth—
(you are a dark hole hiding a mouse.)
churns your shadow in your room,
twists and throws it from ceiling to floor.
(no, your shadow is not a hammer
tacking on the light to stay!)
The chandelier is appeased with your shadow
Which falls below like the skin of a mouse.

You too are thrown from street to street,
from purpose to purpose,
from woman to woman by this
swinging and dazzling life,
till you wonder which purpose was for what end,
(the woman of whom you wished to become a part
is not even a part, even like yourself)
till stars, motions and images
have been emptied out of your eyes,
and like your shadow
your skin settles in a hole.

The Lake

You look strange and perturbed tonight.
Other silences seem like explosions against yours.
With the fog you are like one in a cloister.
The reflecting trees are iron walls,
The moon stands in awe, biting a finger,
The light is afraid to come and touch you,
The stars no longer reach your brow.
The outdoors seems too small for you, Lake.
Will no wind stir you again?
Will your billows no more teach the trees?

Can it be, Lake, that beauty pensively
Looked into you and erased the sky from your mirror?
If so, add me to your mood.
You are the road my feet want to travel
Tonight.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Before Travel

We know the hour of tide when swells the river's muscle.
A street away we feel the urgent water. Restless
we walk our room and each step tensioned
is cameo of the league it strains to cover.

The oldest face of night is lacquered on our windows—
the face of long expecting, face eroded of its features;
its eyeroot we shall find and walk within its seeing.

The sound lows down the river. The patient ships are calling.
Still the river's megaphone mouth utters at our window.
Our vigil is suspicious and on our knees sits heavily.

We are coming. We must wait awhile. And you have other errands.
Fire must flow, and you have load coal to deliver,
things and things to men, and men to destiny.

Cords of our living must be cut, the sprung ends knotted;
the stuffs of friendship packed away; we must have ready
pieces of ourselves for parting gifts our kin will come for.

The Train Into a New Country

Stilled in their other language
our company is neighbor in reserve.

We are but sighting barrels
to our eyes that live
upon the windows; the carriage wood
is whittled down their frames.

Our eyes leap out. They run
the veritable earth of Europe,
France welling immeasurable
from the seal unlidded
on remembered maps.

The train, less boltswift shoots
into the sudden villages, than we
who in the after breath, again
exiled, are ripped away. Houses shrink tidily;
run back secure roofs under.

Minutes of plaided field
now give us rest. We turn
to human France beside us; we utter
mummy words of our schooling; they
to the cinema's run upon our faces
answer.

Our eyes ride out again.
In these vast hours discoverable
as hours of childhood, time needs not flux,
nor we the wrapping of spoilt nerves
in candy-melt and newspapers.

The train
screams in thin metal. We cross a bridge
with double hammering of steel steel
and steelsound on the drum of water.
The harbor wrinkles in ageing distance. Hills
in their elbows clasp the tall ship. The sea
sleeps on sky.

Latitude can expound
the pallor of this heaven; a narrower arc
here bends the sun; and color drips
on pale obliqueness.

Still at the window
we receive the flood; our brows are delta till
the brain's distension aches out to the eye.

Remembering Paris

The matterless riding days blow off.
Remains the substant English month;
the blundered London week we bored
like worms within a pudding, and
this hollow fortnight inned between
travel's clanging door days, here
upon this unspared earth pressed lean
on continental nether stone
and running churn stone of the sea.

It wrinkles to the far cast eye
a mammoth flesh, hill muscular.

We seek the sea; shin down the rope
of ravelled paths from cliff walls hung.
Beneath the water's nap we lie
to watch the wave from rimless cloud
rush to pour the surf cloud.

Between gnarled moor and cliff brink half
into the bay the sea has scooped,
our small house lives with resolute brick
and ancient sunlight reaped from coal.
The chimney snuffles; the weather sweats
upon our sheets; the wind bloats out
the moaned, tumescent air.

Now close we sit our memory within
as theater; we call you back
to laugh, to shine for the absent sun;

and with us, dirges to blaspheme
of weeping wind that knows its grief
but long ago forgot the mourned,
or seems so. Oh, to this bare land
bring trees, bring men. It has a people
niggard in the face; but one look has
for wardrobe, the clerked frown upon
hooked lips. Come, bring your sharp quick faces.

In London, too, you were recalled.
Its nag-neighbor heaven slobbered mist,
stale-gossip-like our windows in;
and New York's distant beach of sky
we brought to mind, but wanted yours
more near, more welcomed, that the trees
could make a dew of, boulevards
could strew like rivers fattening
the shores of men. Your sky could give
habit of space, unlimit time,
to which erect mind may abut
horizonal. With that beam braced
cities do not decay; without it, then
new cities new dug ruins are.

Your streets observe land's mother face;
they glow with centuries' stain and whet,
are gray as painted in eternal rain;
in heat bleak days they cooled our eyes.

As on your sky that strict assures
all forms their form; the independent self
upon the tolerant enmasse
fashions its full firm feature; Man
may run from beast to exquisite
unhunted by a regimen;
look love upon its involute flesh;
take any rôle that validates
the secret seeming in the mind.

No toilet secret is his love;
in streets the kiss is sanitate;
embrace begins the loving work,
and gently woman and man prepare
the clean of care security,
good Nature's nadir rest.

You know the body's tending brings
the mind's mien calmest to the face,
and makes earth edible to its mouth
of inquiry. The warmth of flesh
like ink, and like a pen the touch,
and other flesh to read, this is
communion of the selves. No sense
observes denial; and denied
it wastes us with rebellion. Then
let the eye go free; amuse the ear;
make censers of the nostrils, touch-
royal of the flesh; food must not be
begrudged tax-paying to the gut.

Soul? The deliberated ghost
men set upon each other's eaves?
and Sunday enemy of the week?
Notre Dame's noble stone machine:
we remember it; and angels cold
and tall on portals, who define
divinity of a sculptor's hand;
and grace that haloes broken disks.
The Louvre and Cluny, we remember them,
and weary women in the trains,
by their stale perfumes ridiculed,
who breathed fresh fragrance from brave smiles;
canals that brought upon the land
down blessing fingers from the sky;
vice odiously kind, but kind;
gentle conversation under trees.

But we remember, too; we laughed
to watch your all-four following
of appetite; we turned our backs
upon your doggerel in marble,
monuments declaiming vanity.
We shrank to see distend your armies,
your ranks of beetles eating green
your youth. You have the maw imperial
whereon men, steel-edged, hinge for teeth.
It rends the strength of nations; you
it nourishes never. Oh train out
this canine towardness to the stools of death.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Ballad of the Great Emperor

All things were given the Great Emperor;
High palace-halls, and silks, and jade, and wine;
Flute-girls and dancing girls;
From the nine provinces many a concubine

Most beautiful; there were made for the Emperor
Wild pleasure-parks with pheasants and tame herds of deer.
Pavilions in the mountain-valleys; thin green cataracts
To fields of gold chrysanthemum falling clear.

New delights were sought after for the Emperor;
Peacocks, giraffes, a unicorn, a phoenix fully-grown;
Strange priests who cut themselves with knives, whose wounds
miraculously closed;
Bones of an ancient dragon from Gobi's wastes of stone.

Yet lonely was the soul of the Great Emperor,
As the vast treeless mountains that stood beyond the Wall;
Weary was the spirit of the Emperor,
As the lengthening blue shadows under the trees in the fall.

He said: "The rivers flow
From the high mountains into the blue sea,
Is there no island hid amid the waves
Where rivers flow not, and all time lies still?"

He said: "Day follows night,
And spring succeeds to winter's frost and snow;
But once my heart danced high with the green summer grasses,
Wherefore comes not that moment here again?"

He said: "A child's bright smile
Is lovelier than all things within the world;
But the child smiles without a thought,
Why is it I, the Emperor, cannot smile?"

The scholars were summoned by the Emperor,
They raged in fierce debate, head against head.
The palace-hall was filled with stormy argument,
And still the seasons fled.

Their books were burnt by the orders of the Emperor,
Their heads struck off at last. He said: "I make the ages new
A force surpassing death, a harmony
Where what man wills and longs for must come true."

II

In the region of the East there looms a mountain;
Here many a sage and king for long had come,
To look on all the kingdoms under Heaven,
And the far seas beyond, whence daylight sprung.

Now the Great Emperor, weary of much talking
Without an end, said: "I will ride afar,
To green T'ai Shan, the home of the lost dayspring,
To draw new wisdom from the morning star."

"I will arise and speak alone to Heaven,
Will question the face of my Father in the sky,
Will wrest the jewel from the Dragon's forehead,
Or on the summit of that mountain die."

Attended by a retinue, he set forward,
Attended by a host, he went his way;
But at the base of the mountain, he was halted
By seventy old men, ranked in close array.

They said: "When men of old came to this place,
They put on plain grey robes, and shoes of straw.

They were carried in a palanquin of grass,
That they might not disturb the lightest stone."

They said: "A voice was heard
This morning pealing from the topmost peak;
'Without conformity to moral law,
None ever shall attain my sacred dawn.'"

They said, "A great black cloud
Arises, shrieking, from the valley-floor;
The spirits of the hills are angry now;
You shall not enter, nor make sacrifice."

So spoke the old men, threatening the Great Emperor,
But he spurred on his horse, spite wind and rain;
Though the blasts bellowed, and the thunder crashed,
He reached the top at last, with woe and pain.

He stood upon the summit only to fall
And lie in a pale trance. His followers thought him dead.
But after long he spoke. The storm had gone.
"Let us go down," was all that the Emperor said.

Then silent madness smote the Great Emperor,
Mid works more great than man has ever done;
He spent his days in building his own tomb,
Under its mighty earth-mound now he lies alone.

And should you seek for traces of the Emperor,
Climb to the top of T'ai Shan where he trod;
There you will find a stone, set high and grey, apart:
On it, the one word, "God."

DAVID CARTER

The Visitor

Downstairs the woman waited as if time
had ceased; as if the moments of his being:
the soft caress of Eda here, the chime
of the French clock for midnight, and the fleeing
of bedroom shadows as he turned the light
were but an eyeblink to her.—Dear, he said
and bent once more above the pillow's white
to drive small kisses over Eda's head.

Time gathered on the staircase and stood still,
for the white arms of Eda let him die
down through the past descending deaths until
he stood where all creation is the cry
of memoried gods across the chaos. Storm,
beast and man, and rock and cloud, and sea
tumble in yearning to be love there. Warm
earth is first mother to humanity.

First mother, earth. And the first couch for love.
Man and his wife and mountains bear one blood.
Whence then is Lillith, for the slide and shove
of hills, and ocean's evanescent flood
are but excitements to her, quick and weak.
Life is a pulse, but Lillith is straight fire,
uncomprehending if a mortal speak,
all-comprehending of its own desire.

This would be Lillith. Immortality
sat by his hearth in his own easy-chair.
The sun's fire burned there for him; suddenly
the love that Adam lost bespread her hair.

While upstairs Eda slept in yesterday
he waked in the chemic things of an old earth,
pushed newclad feet on a carpet turned hot clay
to her who knew all pains but those of birth.

(Once, in a far and éerie place
a tall brown prophet's son
had looked intently in his face
and said: Yours is the power and grace.
She does not come to everyone.)

—I do not come to all, she said and stood
in slow astonishment at cryptic words
that in this drawing-room of life and wood
rasped like a garden overstocked with birds,
and with her standing fell her flippant gown
from golden flesh too, too desirable;
her hips and hands turned out, her hair fell down
and garden scents filled up the room too full.

It rolled his mind from fragile wall to wall,
licking from life the dust of little things
as from moist palms once rolled a golden ball
licking up Ida under Venus' wings,
and he stepped forward. Never wanting was,
he thought, like this; and no such want should rise
so suddenly, and for so little cause
and trap a man so married and so wise.

She'll gossip now, whatever may be done,
he thought and: Flesh, to soil such amber flesh.
To make it sweat and cry beneath me, run
in golden strands between my hands, enmesh
in leaping pores with mine. He thought: Why this
is worth itself, no more. Mine is the grace?
That's laughter. Eda's smallest reaching kiss
builds greater than this bottomless embrace.

They stood in magic, though. He could not break
out from this pit's perfumery of spell.
She said: It's not for you or me to shake
what long was written. Time has written well.
We follow time. She raised arms radiant,
shuddering in passion, shamelessly and sly.
—I knew, he said, This foolishness was meant.
His eyes turned ceilingwards in hopes of sky.

(Yours is the power that brings you things,
the prophet once had sung.
—Earth churns beneath your wanderings;
above your head are flung
the banner-clouds of cosmos kings,
though you're afraid, and young.)

—There are things written which are never read,
written in your arteries and on the rivers:
wild love of flesh for those whose souls are dead
and Christ's or Mithra's love for meagre livers.
And as he spoke she brought her breasts to his,
soft arms about him, so he said: You see
such things are sirens, Scylla, Charybdis
to break life's charted stroke on stroke for me.

—I am a rower in an ancient ocean;
I hold the oars upon an ancient quest,
and none can say why life in lifting motion
builds life that dies upon your living breast.
Oh, it were easy now to come ashore
and find new women in the warmth of beaches,
but I have seen what I am rowing for;
my boat shall reach it if the rower reaches.

He put her from him, stood, and watched her shiver,
went on: Mind given to many bodies goes
back to the body, as to sea the river,
to life the human, and to earth the rose.

I have experimented much in passion
and learned no tittle from it but old tricks;
my mind turned wolf and howled from hills, wolf-fashion,
upon earth's herds of female mavericks.

—You touch me now and I could well respond.
I throw you off instead. I long since took
one body, soft and lovely as a pond
set in dark cedars by a passionate brook.
I chose to live in love and long achieving,
bringing my mind to plot the ancient track,
and this is the last of difficult retrieving:
when I refuse you, I have brought mind back.

Get in your clothes, he said, and took a chair
and sat exhausted, hands upon his cheeks.
He thought the hearth-flames beat about the air
and that all words are parched and empty freaks.
—Our minds so married to our love and purpose
go forward, past all sunsets on the tide;
earth's passions shall no longer so usurp us
that when we gutter men shall know we died.

Our thoughts, the passions of our love-built thinking,
shall rear the future, write on timeless pages
secrets for washing up such mundane stinking
as Lillith's secret lies that rot the ages. . . .
And he looked up and she was gone. He said:
It's almost daybreak. Talk has brought the sun.
This is the house where Eda lies in bed,
and she and I and love and life are one.

CLARENCE E. CASON

Home Talent

I

Last of August, time of sweating;
Watermelons, fever-getting.

Dust in sunshine, mud in rain;
Malaria, mosquito bane.

Farming tenants' voices whimper;
Got no money—simper, simper.

Bootleg whisky in fruit jars;
Have a drink in rattling cars.

Tobacco juice bespatters streets;
Above, the butchers hang their meats.

Black and white men loll together;
Sweat a-plenty, damn the weather.

Cotton crop not fit to sell;
Sun-parched fields burned to hell.

That was what they always said:
Children starving, corn all dead.

Whining townsmen, mainly burly;
Yellow though, lose teeth early.

Shrill-voiced women, hollow chested;
Haggling, cooking, never rested.

2

Not a scene for peaceful dying . . .
Yet the doctor's body lying

Feebly twitching in his car . . .
Spread the news, near and far!

Doctor's dying . . . Where's his son?
Get him, get him . . . run, run, run.

He's to play a leading part.
(Tragedy's an ordained art.)

Son is coming, piloted . . .
"Henry, boy, your father's dead."

Son stands stolid, clinches jaw;
Most heartless wretch they ever saw.

"Henry, boy, your father's dead." . . .
No sob, no tear—a heart of lead.

(The actor balks and ruins the play.)
Damn his hide—nothing to say?

Henry speaks, the mutters stop:
"To the undertaker's shop."

Driver turns the stage-car round;
Blood drops drip on the ground.

3

Undertaker props screen door;
People eager, running more.

Humid mother, screaming baby;
Push up closer, more show maybe.

Drugstore keeper, doctors, fools;
Superintendent of the schools.

"Let me have his arm there, here."
Glasses hanging from one ear.

Roll him in, keep back the crowd;
White-haired negro moans aloud.

"Sad, sad, sad" . . . "God, you bet."
"Told his wife about it yet?"

Son runs home; mother knows.
(Telephones are used in shows.)

Sister told by yet another;
Nods in grief . . . "Yes, my brother."

4

Undertaker shows the style;
Coffins changing all the while.

"Henry, boy, your father's dead;
'Give me the best,' he always said."

Telegraph, telephone;
Stop to hear the people moan.

Half with living, half with dead;
O the blood was red . . . red.

Get the Masons, hurry now;
Get the preacher, he knows how.

O my father, peace to thee.
Funeral to-morrow, half past three.

Home again, people there;
Heads bowed low. Do they care?

Mother lying still in bed;
Dear friend gently smoothes her head.

Dead box comes; service good . . .
Do not fear this thing of wood!

Facile poise, professional;
Processional, recessional.

Masons sit on porch through night;
Kindly men, doing right.

Spray mosquitoes, smoke cigars;
Talk of cotton, count the stars.

5

Drugstore blocked with express crates;
See the flowers the doctor rates.

Hammers clatter, drawn nails scream;
Fragrant odors, blossoms gleam. . . .

Home chairs set in every place . . .
"What composure on his face!"

"Shall we raise the window shades?"
In and out the town parades.

Preacher comes at three o'clock;
Scripture ready, death to mock.

Has a colleague for the prayer;
Observes etiquette with care.

On with the regular pantomime . . .
"Does the widow know the time?"

There she comes. . . . "Does she bluff?"
Settle back. . . . She's sad enough.

"Christ alone can help her now." . . .
Crane your necks to see just how.

Hymn about the Methodist plan;
Sung by the second-hand furniture man.

Emotion drunk, drinking still,
On they trail to Graveyard Hill.

Prideful Masons show their signs;
Most of the potentates know their lines

Back to homes at dusk they go,
Debilitated from their woe.

Hearse is covered from the dust;
Hinges oiled to keep out rust. . . .

6

Next morning, as the town was still,
Henry wept on Graveyard Hill.

O travesty of heavenly powers! . . .
He sank among the withering flowers.

YVOR WINTERS

The Extension and Reintegration of the Human Spirit Through the Poetry Mainly French and American Since Poe and Baudelaire

Foreword: Baudelaire My Apologist

To excuse myself for approaching the poetic problem from what is proverbially the "sterile" side, that is from the purely formal, I choose to refer to the example and to some of the comments of one of the great masters of the lyric. It is the terrific discipline, spiritual and literary, of Baudelaire that so saturates his line with meaning. He wrote of the acting of Rouvière: "Et bien que l'intensité du jeu et la projection redoubtable de la volonté tiennent la plus grande part dans cette séduction, tout ce miracle s'accomplit sans effort." That is, if the intensity of the work of art, be it ever so much greater —as it must be—than that of the simple experience, is increased evenly and proportionately throughout, there will be no sense of effort so long as the mind is moving within the boundaries of the form—provided, of course, that one has taken pains to familiarize oneself with the method and materials involved, that is, really to get oneself within the boundaries of the form. Baudelaire can write quite simply, "C'est affreux, ô mon âme!" and it is. There are few poets of whom one can say as much—it is a faculty of the very small number of absolute masters. One finds a comparable power in the sonnets of Shakespeare, the lyrics of Thomas Hardy and of Emily Dickinson, in the tragedies of Racine. It is something over and beyond the explosive grandeur of *Bâteau Ivre* or even of Marlowe. It is not what is said that weighs so heavily; but one feels behind the line, in all that is *omitted,* a lifetime of monstrous discipline, from which is born the power of absolute wisdom without evident additional effort. Racine claimed that the entire labor of writing his tragedies consisted in plotting the action: the rest was

mere routine. This is probably a great exaggeration, but it suggests an important truth.

The only godhead possible for man, *as man* (in this world, or, if you like, in the next) is not a mystical but a moral godhead. The mystic achieves godhead only through self-annihilation, which is logically inconceivable. The man who, through a dynamic and unified grasp on life, lives fully and to the point of being able to renounce life with dignity, having known it, achieves something vastly more difficult and more noble than the immediate evasion and denial of the mystic or the whimper of the nihilist. It is in the consideration of this fact that we find the true function of the poet: not to present something enheartening, cheerful, and simple to the simple-minded, nor a sentimental or decorative view of extinction and the approach thereto to the emotionalist, but to extend as far as possible the human consciousness and to organize the facts of life into a new and more dynamic synthesis. The facts of life at best are disheartening; the vision of life which man has little by little constructed (or perhaps one should stay stripped bare) is all but crushing. To evade the facts and attempt bluff vigor, as Browning often seems to do, is not convincing to the man who has experienced the imaginative facts. The artist who is actually ignorant of the metaphysical horror of modern thought or who cannot feel it imaginatively—and there are many such—is of only a limited, a more or less decorative, value. But the artist who can feel the full horror, organize it into a dynamic attitude or state of mind, asserting by that very act his own life and the strength and value of his own life, and who can leave that state of mind completed behind him for others to enter, has performed the greatest spiritual service that can be performed. For it is only the superior man, the man capable of experiencing art, who finds himself in any dilemma; but the emotional tone, whether of vigor or of decadence, felt by the superior man, will eventually, by whatever devious and subtle means, filter down infecting in one degree or another the entire structure of society. The increasing popularity of several species of second hand nihilism in our own day is probably responsible in a large degree for the decreasing functioning of the will among all of the educated classes; an obvious symptom of which is the de-

pressing but steady increase of sexual perversion, not only in our "art centers", but in nearly all of our universities, large and small, with the ultimate spiritual dishonesty and sterility that it seems in nearly all cases to entail.

Baudelaire wrote of Balzac: "J'ai mainte fois été étonné que la grande gloire de Balzac fût de passer pour un observateur; il m'avait toujours semblé que son principale mérite était d'être visionnaire, et visionnaire passionné. . . . Bref, chacun chez Balzac, même les portiers, a du génie. Toutes les âmes sont des armes chargées de volonté jusqu'à la gueule." T. S. Eliot writes: "If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of 'sublimity' misses the mark. For it is not the 'greatness', the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts." But is not this very "pressure" which Mr. Eliot emphasizes the ultimate ethical criterion? It is the "will" which Baudelaire found in Balzac's doorkeepers—that is, their will to live as intensely as possible as doorkeepers fixed in the rigid vision that constituted the mentality of Balzac, a vision stretched to the utmost intensity of its sort. Art is the most intense moment of consciousness: the intensity of the moment of fusion is the final moral assertion of the artist, who by that act *makes an integral part of his own dynamic existence* the fact that he has met, no matter how terrible it may be. It is the final proof that he, as a self-directed integer, is morally superior to the facts of life. A successful poem, then, may even be, as an experience and a moral evaluation, a negation of the ideational material that it contains. This fact alone can explain the spiritual security to be found in the most terrible of the tragic poets. This faculty I almost never find in the purely derivative poetry of T. S. Eliot, which, so far as it presents any original attitude, offers one that is purely negative and nihilistic. Mr. Eliot seems to have been crushed by his vision—his sense of time in an incomprehensible universe leaves him gasping. He cannot face it except from behind the screen of the classics—he offers quotations from the best poets, along with a few footnotes and commentaries of his own, to prove

that it is not worth while to face the vision, to live fully. Unless one has the strength to desire to live to the end, in full view of the horror, the tragic emotion becomes impossible. There is no tragedy in losing that which is not valued, nor gain in possessing it: the world will end for Mr. Eliot "not with a bang but a whimper". Baudelaire's vision is not essentially different from that of Mr. Eliot—much that is most interesting in the latter's verse comes almost directly from Baudelaire, as well as from Laforgue, Gautier, and the Elizabethans—but Baudelaire maintained himself intact and grew. It is this growth under pressure that gives his poems their experiential density. He was too engrossed with what he knew first hand to borrow very often. His life was a difficult struggle to master his own experience—not to endow with a semblance of exterior mastery a private collection of favorite quotations and references.

With regard to the influence temporarily exerted by Mr. Eliot on the younger men, as well as to the bad start to which Mr. Eliot himself got off in following Laforgue, I sometimes wonder if the formula of discovery-via-technique, which I shall discuss more at length a little later, may not apply to movements as well as poems. The horrible in the early stages of romanticism, in writers of the Radcliffe-Lewis type, is purely, I think one is safe in saying, an affectation. It is probably an affectation the greater part of the time in Poe—that is, a mechanical formula—and occasionally at least in Baudelaire. But by means of this sort of technical induction, Poe and Baudelaire beyond any doubt discovered the emotional horror, the experience of horror, that resides in the modern concept of life. One thinks of Baudelaire's account of the actor Rouvière, who, when he wished to understand the emotions, the character, of another person, cast his face in the expression worn by that person *and then knew what he thought.** There is now no further escape from the thing they found and fixed. It would have existed, a vague and terrible background anyway. And it is better to have it defined and incorporated into a dynamic attitude than wandering about like an unlaid ghost. Writing of Guys, Baudelaire said: "Mais si, par hasard, quelqu'un malavisé cherchait dans ces compositions de M. G., disséminés un peu partout, l'occasion de satis-

* Some similar notion occurs somewhere in Poe.

faire une malsaine curiosité, je le préviens charitablement qu'il n'y trouvera rien de ce qui peut exciter une imagination malade. Il ne rencontrera *que le vice inévitable,* c'est-a-dire le regard du démon embusqué dans les ténèbres. . . ." Baudelaire, having himself felt those same eyes in the dark, was strong enough and skillful enough to stare till he could find them and face them.

The late Jacques Rivière wrote of Baudelaire's "vers si parfaits, si mesurés, que d'abord on hésite à leur donner tout leur sens; un espoir veille quelques instants, un doute sur leur profondeur." He quotes among several examples the line:

Le printemps adorable a perdu son odeur.

And yet the weight that one feels in this line when one reads it in the poem—*Le Goût du Néant*—is in a considerable part lost in isolation; and this fact reveals at least one very important part of the secret of Baudelaire's art. No less, I believe, than Mallarmé, was he a master in relating rhymes to meaning, in relating syllable lengths, tonalities, phrase-stresses, pauses, word-order, to meaning. We are told that the poet's art consists in the choice of words. But beyond the masters of rhetoric—and there are many such who are very great, men like Marlowe, Keats, Rimbaud, there are a few supreme men who seem to succeed in the most difficult realm of experience, almost without apparent effort. Mallarmé, in his later work especially, tended more and more to isolate the arcana of expression (consider, for instance, the sonnet beginning *Surgi de la croupe at du bond,* the very first line of which, with nothing to follow, no meaning no subject attached, is dynamic) through the logical obscurity of his style, and, frequently, through the choice of subjects that in themselves are trivial or bizarre or both. The name of Mallarmé, as a result of his concentration on this problem, has been almost synonymous with the quality; and we are likely to overlook the fact that a few poets, more obvious (and more profound) as regards the subject-content of their poems, have been at least as subtle and indubitably more profound as regards the actual æsthetic experience. But to quote the poem with which this train of thought began:

Morne esprit autrefois amoureux de la lutte,
L'Espoir, dont l'éperon attisait ton ardeur,
Ne veut plus t'enfourcher! Couche-toi sans pudeur,
Vieux cheval dont le pied à chaque obstacle butte.

Résigne-toi, mon cœur; dors ton sommeil de brute.

Esprit vaincu, fourbu! Pour toi, vieux maraudeur,
L'amour n'a plus de goût, non plus que la dispute;
Adieu donc, chants du cuivre et soupirs de la flute!
Plaisirs, ne tentez plus un coeur sombre et boudeur!

Le Printemps adorable a perdu son odeur!

Et le Temps m'engloutit minute par minute,
Comme la neige immense un corps pris de roideur;
Je contemple d'en haut le globe en sa rondeur,
Et je n'y cherche plus l'abri d'une cahute!

Avalanche veux-tu m'emporter dans ta chute?

One can point out satisfactorily, I suspect, only the more obvious stylistic elements that contribute to the massive density of the poem. There is the monotony of the two rhymes throughout, intensified by the couplet effect produced by the fifth, tenth, and fifteenth lines. There is also the preponderance of rhymes in—*utte*, the effect of which, especially in the fifth line, is to produce a feeling of tragic indifference, of sullen abruptness. Every line in the poem bears not only its own weight, but the weight of all that has gone before. It is almost never that one finds a poem so powerfully, so inseparably, a unit. One may say that this is "nothing but technique", that the poet should say what he means in plain words. But acuteness of intelligence cannot be renounced by the possessor; and to the reader who is aware of these values they are plain enough and render the words much plainer—whereas additional words would only obscure the issue. To find a parallel in logic, such a poem is as superior to the tirades of Hugo or Byron, as is a definition by St. Thomas Aquinas to the ecstatic didacticism of Diderot or of Rousseau. It defines the experience in full, and refrains from obscuring it. These technical means are as definitely instruments of expression as are the contents of the dictionary. It is by such means that the poet

produces his full effect, while having the air of understating his emotion—I believe that this accounts for the statement of Rivière, as for the failure to react highly on the part of readers conscious only of the meaning content of separate words to poems by Hardy, Baudelaire, and a few others. Between the words we are aware of the sound of the voice, the expression of the face. And it must be continually and rigidly born in mind that such expression is impossible unless something is perceived. It *is* the perception, or an integral part of it—*these technical nuances are a part of what is said, a subtle and powerful manifestation of the spirit.* One can point them out by means of rough classifications, but they are not, basically, classifiable—each one is a phenomenon, its own definition, a manifestation of the intelligence of the master.

Here is a similar quality in English from number CXVI of the sonnets of Shakespeare:

> Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickle's compass come;
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

Or again, to quote Thomas Hardy:

> I say, "I'll seek her side
> Ere hindrance interposes;"
> But eve in midnight closes,
> And here I still abide.
>
> When darkness wears I see
> Her sad eyes in a vision;
> They ask, "What indecision
> Detains you, Love, from me?—
>
> "The creaking hinge is oiled,
> I have unbarred the backway,
> But you tread not the trackway;
> And shall the thing be spoiled?
>
> "Far cockcrows echo shrill,
> The shadows are abating,
> And I am waiting, waiting;
> But O, you tarry still!"

The meaning-value of such a word as *spoiled* in this particular place, the sound-value of such a rhyme as *backway* and *trackway,* come closer to the effect produced by Baudelaire in *Le Goût du Néant,* than does almost anything else I can think of. This type of thing recurs constantly in Hardy, in Baudelaire, and in Shakespeare's sonnets: it is a species of slight, but precise, drop into a mastered colloquialism or semblance of awkwardness. Its spiritual implications are frequently incalculable. In Emily Dickinson and Donne, two poets about as great, or very nearly as great, the norm of expression is a shade too violent and bizarre commonly to permit of this particular means of definition.

The Mechanics of the Mood

I. *The Scattered Method*—This is the simplest, as well as the most primitive method of attack on the subject, and remains the most common even today. It might well be illustrated diagrammatically by a focal point upon which equidistant lines converge—searchlights, as it were, illuminating a given idea or feeling from different angles. These various rays of light—the images and anti-images of a poem—have no intellectual connection with one another save that they all converge upon a common center, and are, or should be, in some degree related emotionally. We find this procedure, for instance, in Nashe's poem beginning:

> Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss,
> This world uncertain is.

The opening lines strike the note of the poem, and this is reverted to in the refrain at the end of each stanza. Every stanza develops this emotion or idea in a slightly different way, and there is no connection from stanza to stanza, save in so far as each deals with the same theme. In this particular poem one finds a similar method employed within the stanza, and this is common elsewhere. The description of a scene or object, as it involves no definitely logical order of details, will usually be classifiable under this heading. Very frequently, in fact, the details of such a description will not only

constitute a scattered approach to a visual whole, but to a mood or emotion, as well, as in the case of Remy Belleau's *Avril.*

This method of composition, as I have said, occurs very early in literary history—is perhaps the earliest method used in lyrical writing that is in any degree sustained. Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century we find an acceleration of sequence beginning to take place. Nashe's poem moves much more rapidly than do most of the songs of his period or for some time thereafter; but in many of Emily Dickinson's poems a somewhat greater acceleration can be discerned, and this change is still more noticeable in the work of such definitely "modern" poets as Laforgue and Dr. Williams. Into much of the work of these two, however, especially of the former, there enters another element, the alternation of mood, which I shall discuss later. The method seems to me fully as valid today as ever for most purposes, and is too generally applicable to raise any of the particular philosophical problems involved in certain more narrowly limited ways of writing. It embraces what one might call the song-tradition, beginning with the *Sea-Farer,* including such thirteenth century pieces as *Alisoun* and others of the same group, Campion, Blake, Hardy, and reaching even to W. C. Williams.

II. *The Logical Method*—This method is a late and sophisticated procedure that in Europe was most widespread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though it appears earlier among the Provençaux and among such writers as Guido Cavalcanti. It is most strikingly exemplified possibly, certainly so far as English is concerned, in the work of Donne and his followers—we may with fair safety say that it is one of the chief characteristics of the Metaphysical School, perhaps the chief characteristic, though it is not invariably employed by them. *The Weeper,* by Crashaw, for example, follows a scattered inter-stanzaic relationship and a more or less logical intra-stanzaic one. This poem is, however, rather in the later Italian than in the English mode. The important fact about the logical method is that, as its name implies, each statement follows clearly out of the last through an apparently inevitable logical sequence. Mr. Eliot gives an excellent analysis of Marvell's poem *To His Coy*

Mistress, with this trait, among others in mind. The logical development gives to the poem that quality of "tough reasonableness" which Mr. Eliot praises. Whether or not this quality is a concomitant part of "æsthetic form", which should then be weakened by its absence as in such a poem as Rimbaud's *Larme,* or whether it is an additional and more or less objective binding, not necessary to the achievement of artistic form in general but only to the achievement of form in dealing with a certain type of emotion, I should find it difficult to say. It seems to me dangerous to exclude as non-æsthetic a legitimate function of the spirit which can be demonstrated by literary examples to be at least harmless and probably beneficial in certain cases. The thing should be determined ultimately on the basis of the extent of the experience dynamized by the form, and, so far as contemporary writing is concerned, on the basis of availability. I shall therefore beg leave to postpone this question for a few more pages.

In Vaughan's poem called *The Lamp,* we have a more or less elaborate comparison of the poet's life to his reading-lamp, resulting in a frankly didactic poem of great beauty; although the method often led the English poets of the same century into elaborate absurdities—certain figures at times got more or less away from their authors and progressed almost of their own inevitable nature to logical conclusions of an extraordinary variety. This occurred mainly when the poet started with an external object and tried to draw similitudes from it, as in *The Weeper,* and seldom when, as in the greater portion of Donne, he began with an abstract concept and proceeded into the field of concrete experience. The former method, in general, is the Italian-Spanish, the latter the English-French. It is the difference between elaborate decoration and the intense experience of a complex mind. Vaughan's poem, to return, is worth quoting for comparison with other passages:

> 'Tis dead night round about: Horrour doth creepe
> And move on with the shades; stars nod and sleepe,
> And through the dark aire spin a firie thread,
> Such as doth gild the lazie glow-worm's bed.
> Yet burn'st thou here a full day while I spend
> My rest in cares, and to the dark world lend

These flames as thou dost thine to me; I watch
That houre, which must thy life and mine dispatch,
But still thou dost out-goe me, I can see
Met in thy flames all acts of piety;
Thy light is *Charity;* thy heat is *Zeale;*
And thy aspiring, active fires reveale
Devotion still on wing: Then, thou dost weepe
Still as thou burn'st, and the warm droppings creepe
To measure out thy length, as if thou'dst know
What stock, and how much time were left thee now;
Nor dost thou spend one teare in vaine, for still
As thou dissolv'st to them, and they distill,
They're stored up in the socket, where they lye,
When all is spent, thy last and sure supply:
And such is true repentance; ev'ry breath
Wee spend in sighs is treasure after death.
Only one point escapes thee; That thy Oile
Is still out with thy flame, and so both faile;
But whenso'ere I'm out, both shall be in,
And where thou mad'st an end, there I'll begin.

To reinforce the quality of this poem, let me quote another, slightly more sublimated but scarcely less remarkable, by Richard Crashaw. It is entitled *The Recommendation:*

Those Houres, and that which hovers o're my End,
Into thy hands and hart, lord, I commend.

Take both to Thine Account, that I and mine
In that Hour and in these, may be all thine.

That as I dedicate my devoutest Breath
To make a kind of Life for my Lord's Death,

So from his living and life-giving Death,
My dying Life may draw a new and never-fleeting Breath.

Mr. Eliot has considered in some detail the qualities of the metaphysical poets, and it is an impertinence to attempt to improve upon his studies. I allow myself simply a brief summary of these poets'

outstanding qualities: a logical structure (usual but not invariable); a tendency to fuse very precise thought with very intense concrete feeling, not using them alternately, nor using one as a decorative adjunct to the other, but combining both in the same statement; a tendency, especially marked in Donne (as well as in the Last Sonnets of Ronsard and in Baudelaire), to fuse in the same statement intense physical pain and mental anguish—the two become synonymous; and a rhythm, the precision and hardness of which tends occasionally, as in Donne, even to arbitrary brittleness.

These tendencies are, of course, all facets of the same phenomenon —the spiritual unity of the poets. Thought, for these men, was not an academic bypath, but the core of experience, and all their concrete experience remained inextricably bound up in the network of their beliefs, suspicions, and interests. The concrete and the abstract were one; the body and soul were if not one at least hopelessly interfused on this planet; bodily and spiritual suffering were one or at least interpenetrative; and as their thought was precise, their expression was precise, and metre is as definitely a part of expression —even of the mechanics of thinking—as the meaning-content of verbs and nouns. This tendency entered dramatic poetry in some degree doubtless, as Mr. Eliot has suggested, by way of Ben Jonson, and may have reached the dramatists of the decadence partly through the lyric poets. But a very interesting alteration took place. This passage from the *Two Noble Kinsmen* appears to be by Fletcher, but the authorship is not important:

> Remember that your fame
> Knowls in the ear o' th' world: what you do quickly,
> Is not done rashly; your first thought is more
> Than others' labored meditance: your premeditating
> More than their actions: but oh *Jove,* your actions,
> Soon as they move, as Asprays do the fish,
> Subdue before they touch: think, dear Duke, think
> What beds our slain Kings have.

The following passage from the same play is printed as given here in the Cambridge Edition of Beaumont and Fletcher. Dyce and most other editors have reprinted the passage as prose. One can, with a little care, however, select lines and short passages from the

admittedly Fletcherian plays, beginning with the earliest and running down through to the last, that form a sort of progressive development of Fletcher's line from the early monotonous eleven-syllable affair up to passages pretty consistently like this last, and much of his prose moves to a related cadence. Just where verse left off and prose began in Fletcher's mind is no great matter—the interesting fact is that, whether through Fletcher's taste or a printer's error, the following passage is available today as verse for those who wish to read it:

> I may depart with little, while I live, something I
> May cast to you, not much: Alas the Prison I
> Keep, though it be for great ones, yet they seldom
> Come; before one Salmon, you shall take a number
> Of Minnows: I am given out to be better lined
> Than it can appear, to me report is a true
> Speaker: I would I were really, that I am
> Delivered to be: Marry, what I have (be it what
> It will) I will assure upon my daughter at
> The day of my death.

The reader will observe that, while all the syntactical and verbal machinery of the lyric poets exists in these passages, it is brought to bear in the first passage upon a very slight meaning and in the second upon almost no meaning at all—it is little more than an empty syntactical formula; that the imprecision in thought results in a corresponding imprecision of metre, the second passage being worse than the first in both respects, but neither passage being remotely comparable as successful statements to the poems by Vaughan and Crashaw. It is not that one objects to irregularity of line-length, but that the line wobbles with in itself: the poet is trying to get a violin tone by playing on a clothes-line. The line lacks integrity, existence as a unit, and hence cannot have existence as a part of a whole, nor can a clearly defined whole be built around it. Such lyrics as the two already quoted, or as Herbert's *Church Monuments,* or as Donne's Valedictions *Forbidding Mourning* and *On His Name Carved on a Window-Pane,* form a complete antithesis even to the best verse of the later dramatists.

Mr. T. S. Eliot has been widely regarded as at least in part a disciple of the school of Donne. In so far as his style is Elizabethan, it seems to me entirely, or almost entirely, in the manner of the blurring-out, the decadence, as it occurs in the later drama, a poetry of little or no very tangible value:

> Signs are taken for wonders. "We would see a sign!"
> The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
> Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year
> Came Christ the tiger
>
> In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
> To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
> Among whispers; by Mr Silvero
> With caressing hands, at Limoges
> Who walked all night in the next room;
>
> By Hakagawa bowing among the Titians;
> By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
> Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp
> Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door.
> Vacant shuttles
> Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,
> An old man in a draughty house
> Under a windy knob.

This is far better work than the second passage from Fletcher, probably not quite so good as the first. But we have here likewise an enormously sententious manner concentrating on a very small meaning—there is an expansion of the subject matter by means of syntactic elaboration that is almost invariably the device of the wary stylist trying to conceal the fact that he is not travelling very rapidly. This poem, easily Mr. Eliot's best, contains what is probably his one passage of major poetry:

> I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
> To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
> I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
> Since what is kept must be adulterated?
> I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
> How should I use it for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane when the sense has cooled. . . .

But the passage, though magnificently precise in itself, and quite terrible, arises from a mass of carefully veiled imprecisions, which, because of their syntax, appear on first glance to have more meaning than is really the case. Mr. Eliot, when he has little or nothing to say, is always careful to leave the issue in doubt; he does not, as does Fletcher above, lay bare his own poverty in the last line; but this scarcely alters the fact of the poverty. In *The Waste Land* the writing is looser, the metre more lax, and the organization of the whole very slight. In *The Hollow Men* even the syntactic disguise is in the main thrown off:

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

There are few attempts more pathetic than this in modern literature to keep on going, line by line, in spite of everything.

The other modern efforts to rejuvenate the metaphysical school have been on the whole ill-fated—for one thing, the shadow of Mr. Eliot hangs over most of them. Archibald MacLeish has done a few fine lyrics that suggest Vaughan rather than Donne, but because, I suspect, of a certain spiritual limpness, caused by or the cause of Mr. MacLeish's own variety of nihilism, they have not quite the muscularity even of Vaughan: Mr. MacLeish suggests a Vaughan in part dissolved in tears and worn away, tears to which he refuses to will even an instant's resistance. His blank verse moves forward heavily, line by line, with practically no organization into larger units of thought or rhythm, a tendency which is, I believe, another

aspect of the same state of mind. In his most recent work, *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish,* a great deal of cosmic petulance is expended in his reactions to a theory of art that even a casual perusal of Aristotle should have eliminated and to his more assertive and self-advertising contemporaries; and this, with nothing but his doctrine of human worthlessness as a substructure, leads to a vast amount of undignified and Eliotized exhibitionism. One makes these objections in spite of the fine passages the poem contains—or rather because of them: it is criminal for genius to be so needlessly unintelligent. Louise Bogan has experimented in the metaphysical direction, with, so far as I am concerned, two successes, a *Song* beginning, *Come break with Time,* and one called *The Mark,* which I find among the most startling poems of our period. Mr. Allen Tate, without the skill of either of these poets, or at least their consistent skill, has been completely successful in five or six poems and in part successful in others. And his soul is tougher than that of Mr. MacLeish, wider in its implications than that of Miss Bogan: his state of mind is definitely a "major" state, fully aware and serious, so that his occasional successes in expression are impressive. He does not, however, indulge in the main in a purely logical structure, and when he does his poems usually collapse. His best poems, *Mr. Pope, Death of Little Boys, Light, Ditty, The Subway,* build outward from specific experiences, and do so in an imagery that is wholly concrete, despite the degree of intellectuality behind it. The decidedly metaphysical poetry of Hart Crane, though it presents certain aspects suggestive of Donne, is really based on a very different principle of composition and will be considered later. The brilliant, though little known, poems of Pearl Andelson Sherry, in spite of their "metaphysical" content, or rather background, likewise build out from the specific experience in concrete terms. The two most remarkable poems of Mr. Wallace Stevens, *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle* and *Sunday Morning* (the version in the Monroe-Henderson anthology, *not* the one in *Harmonium*) represent a higher degree of logicalness than most of the poems of our time. It is interesting that, in the contemporary hullabaloo about the metaphysical school of Donne, these poems should be overlooked even by Mr. Stevens' admirers (Mr. Munson, on the basis of his minor puns and jingles,

classifies him as a "dandy"); while Mr. Eliot, poetically an anti-Donne, becomes the poetic model of Donne's supposed admirers, simply on the basis of his admirable essays. The logical method in general, however, seems to be very seldom attempted in a pure form today, and it is still more seldom successful: and the reasons for this will be considered in connection with forms that have displaced it.

III. *The Narrative Method*—Narrative, in a simple form, at any rate, is similar to logic in that each successive stage in its development seems to be caused of necessity by the last. It is a sort of concrete logic, and this parallel must be kept in mind while considering it. Narrative, however, frequently tends to concentrate too exclusively upon external data, presenting a dry skeleton, like a geometric formula, rather than an experience in all its fullness. External data may imply much that is not external or they may not; but very often the implications of values beyond the external are not only missing, but the action itself deals with so limited a problem that more profound treatment were impossible. This is especially true of short fiction—the stories of Mr. Ernest Hemingway, in spite of the skill exercised in their composition, or because of the carefully observed limitations of that skill, are a lamentable example. Even more ambitious fictionists are likely to suffer from related limitations. Henry James, an infinitely capable artist, writing of charming but thoroughly mediocre individuals, was forced to deal with the experience of those individuals, regardless of how brilliantly he might perceive it. Now if the work of art is to be especially prized as the organization of all the most difficult aspects of experience in a single dynamic attitude, or is to present some scale of emotional reference or means of evoking such experiences, and drawing them, consciously or subconsciously, into such a attitude, the experience of the characters of *The Golden Bowl* (or of any other work of pure fiction), cannot possibly be as complete or as profound as the experience of, let us say, John Donne. The metaphysical experience is almost completely eliminated, and for the reader—let us say a Donne or a Baudelaire—to whom the metaphysical experience is the central experience, coloring and involving everything else, such a novel as *The Golden Bowl* can be

little more than a luxury, exquisite, marvelous, but not necessary or enormously important as a spiritual experience, and on the whole a trifle exasperating. Such books as *Moby Dick,* by Melville, or the novels of Elizabeth Madox Roberts, especially *My Heart and My Flesh,* with their heroic apostrophes, epic descriptions, Elizabethan insanity and excesses, probably come closer to involving the whole consciousness than does the more perfect, wholly sound, and purely fictional work of Henry James.

Poetic narrative, stripped to a bare statement of incident, is likely to suffer from the same defect, though the greater intensity of imagery that sometimes results may overcome it. The English and Scottish ballads are a case in point. Poetic narrative, however, that involves an account of all the mental turnings of Adam, Lucifer, and God, or of a Lear or Coriolanus, are likely to run nearly the entire gamut of experiential possibilities. And the structure, let me repeat, is just as inevitable, just as "logical" as in the case of a lyrical argument by Donne. Dante is perhaps the largest-scale example available of the logical poet, as Shakespeare or possibly Racine of the narrative. To prove that one surpasses the other is very difficult.

4. *The Psychological Method*—The name of this form is misleading, as any form into which the mind naturally falls or that evokes æsthetic reactions is obviously psychological enough; but the name has been used to describe it, the other names that have been likewise applied—dream, stream-of-consciousness and so on—seem to me still more vicious; and, with the precaution of this brief warning, I am willing to let well enough alone. It consists of a lowering of the connections between the parts of the poem, otherwise of one of the types already described, to or below the threshold of consciousness, so that the progression from place to place, from event to event, from idea to idea, or from sense-perception to sense-perception, is similar to the method of change in dream or in revery. A certain emotional tone is maintained, although it may consist of graduated waves, and may be controlled by subconscious or semiconscious feeling or thought, from and to which the poem departs and returns, but to which its images

and anti-images bear no such definite relationship as in the case of the scattered method.

Rimbaud's *Larme* comes near to being the most profound and magnificent expression of the imprecise, wandering, and frequently terrible feelings attendant upon dream, revery, and insanity, that I have ever read. The poem represents in a way two landscapes connected by an event, or, rather one landscape as it appears before and after an event. The details of the landscape and the attendant feelings of the protagonist in each case are instances of the scattered method reduced to a dream-state, and the event, the coming of the storm and night, which appears to introduce a narrative element (though not necessitated by anything that has preceded), is in reality merely an intensification of the mood—the protagonist is suddenly sucked deeper in the direction of complete unconsciousness, and the terror becomes more profound:

> Loin des oiseaux, des troupeaux, des villageoises,
> Je buvais accroupis dans quelque bruyère
> Entourée de tendre bois de noisetiers,
> Par un brouillard d'après-midi tiède et vert.
>
> Que pouvais-je boire dans cette jeune Oise,
> Ormeaux sans voix, gazon sans fleurs, ciel couvert:
> Que tirais-je à la gourde de colocase?
> Quelque liqueur d'or, fade et qui fait suer.
>
> Tel, j'eusse été mauvaise enseigne d'auberge.
> Puis l'orage changea le ciel jusqu'au soir.
> Ce furent des pays noirs, des lacs, des perches,
> Des colonnades sous la nuit bleue, des gares.
>
> L'eau des bois se perdait sur les sables vierges.
> Le vent, du ciel, jetait des glaçons aux mares . . .
> Or! tel qu'un pécheur d'or ou de coquillages,
> Dire que je n'ai pas eu souci de boire!

Baudelaire seems to have had the first glimmering of the abstract principle of this sort of writing. He wrote of Poe:

"Or, il est incontestable que—semblables à ces impressions fugitives et frappantes, d'autant plus frappantes dans leurs retours qu'elles sont plus fugitives, qui suivent quelquefois un symptôme extérieur, une espêce d'avertissement comme un son de cloche, une note musicale, ou un parfum oublié, et qui sont elles-mêmes suivies d'un évènement semblable à un évènement déjà connu et qui occupait la même place dans une chaine antérieurement révélée—semblables à ces singuliers rêves périodiques qui fréquentent nos sommeils il existe dans l'ivresse non-seulement des enchaînement de rêves, mais des séries de raisonnements, qui ont besoin, pour se reproduire, du milieu, qui leur a donné naissance. Si le lecteur m'a suivi sans répugnance, il a déja deviné ma conclusion: je crois que dans beaucoup de cas, non pas certainement dans tous, l'ivrognerie de Poe était un moyen mnémonique, une méthode de travail, méthode énergique et mortelle, mais appropriée à sa nature passionnée."

I have a feeling that Poe's method was in a considerable degree closer to the technique-induced hallucination of Mallarmé than to the method here postulated, though this is purely a matter of conjecture. But what a formula this is for the hallucinated phase of Rimbaud, a poet who was not to appear publicly till 1873! Nothing could be more concise or more comprehensive.

Baudelaire seems also to have been aware of the phase of the "psychological" procedure to which I have just alluded in connection with Mallarmé. He states that, in his belief, technique need not hinder perception but may even facilitate it. Technique, then, is not merely a means of recording perception but is actually a means to discovery, a projection, a refinement, an intensification, of the spirit, created by the spirit to mark its boundaries more precisely, to extend them a little farther, to differentiate itself a little more distinctly from the remainder of the universe, from "nature," from that which will eventually absorb it and which is continually endeavoring to absorb and destroy it. Technique so understood not only has a place in the moral system, but is the ultimate development of the moral system; it is the outer boundary of consciousness. The poet with an infinitely subtle technique is as much better-off than the poet with none as the chemist with a fine balance than the chemist weighing with his bare hands. The

exigencies of the medium themselves rouse, for a fraction of a second, perhaps, to the level of consciousness, perceptions that would otherwise have remained in the "subconscious," undiscovered; and the technique-sharpened sensitivity is able in that moment to seize on the perception and fix it in its place in the general scheme. This method of working has doubtless existed in one degree or another in practically all of the great poets. It is difficult, however, to find traces of its becoming a definite system previous to Poe, and even in Poe the traces are slight. They are occasionally more evident in Emily Dickinson, and it becomes quite obviously a system in the later Mallarmé, is adopted by various minor symbolists in varying degrees, and is used quite consistently and on a rather more ambitious scale today by Hart Crane, an American, whose philosophical foundation is built upon Whitman and Blake. Here is a specimen of the thing as found in Mallarmé:

Surgi de la croupe et du bond
D'une verrerie éphémère
Sans fleurir la veillée amère
Le col ignoré s'interrompt.

Je crois bien que deux bouches n'ont
Bu, ni son amant ni ma mère,
Jamais à la même Chimère,
Moi, sylphe de ce froid plafond!

Le pur vase d'aucun breuvage
Que l'inexhaustible veuvage
Agonise mais ne consent,

Naïf baiser des plus funèbres!
A rien expirer annoçant
Une rose dans les ténèbres.

And here is Crane's *Repose of Rivers,* one of his simpler pieces:

The willows carried a slow sound,
A saraband the wind mowed on the mead.
I could never remember
That seething steady leveling of the marshes
Till age had brought me to the sea.

Flags, weeds. And remembrance of steep alcoves
Where cypresses shared the noon's
Tyranny; they drew me into hades almost.
And mammoth turtles climbing sulphur dreams
Yielded, while sun-silt rippled them
Asunder . . .

How much I would have bartered! the black gorge
And all the singular nestings in the hills
Where beavers learn stitch and tooth.
The pond I entered once and quickly fled—
I remember now its singing willow rim.

And finally, in that memory all things nurse;
After the city that I finally passed
With scalding unguents spread and smoking darts
The monsoon cut across the delta
At gulf gates. . . . There, beyond the dykes

I heard wind flaking sapphire, like this summer,
And willows could not hold more steady sound.

We have here an obvious and commonplace symbol—the course of a river standing for the life of man—and the monologue is presumably spoken by the river itself. The symbolic value of the details, however, is not so precisely determinable—they are details not of the life of man nor even directly referable to the life of man, but are living and marvelous details of a river's course, with strange intellectual and emotional overtones of their own. Mr. Robert Penn Warren has remarked that the life of an allegorical poem resides precisely in that margin of meaning that cannot be interpreted allegorically. As in the poem of Mallarmé, the words are constantly balancing on, almost slipping from, the outermost edge of their possible meaning. Their meaning is defined frequently not by the dictionary, but by their relation to other words about them in the same predicament. Mallarmé wrote of the poetic line as that which, "de plusieurs vocables, refait un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue et comme incantatoire." Everything in the line is strangely incandescent, seething, alive. There is not the feel-

ing of muffled bluntness, of experiential as well as intellectual, uncertainty, to be found in the first passage from Mr. Eliot.

The psychological procedure has gone still further. In the work of Miss Gertrude Stein the logical (syntactic) connections within the sentence have broken down; and in the latest work by Mr. Joyce, this disintegration has continued even into the word. Let me quote an article by Mr. Eugene Jolas, called *The Revolution of Language and James Joyce*:

"While Mr Joyce, beginning with *Ulysses,* and in his still unnamed novel, was occupied in exploding the antique logic of words, analogous experiments were being made in other countries. In order to give language a more modern elasticity, to give words a more compressed meaning through disassociation from their accustomed connections, and to liberate the imagination with primitivistic conceptions of verbs and nouns, a few scattered poets deliberately worked in the laboratories of their various languages along new lines.

"Leon-Paul Fargue in his prose poems creates astonishing neologisms, although retaining in a large measure the classical purity of French. He slashes syllables, transposes them from one word to the subsequent word, builds new words from root vocables and introduces thus an element entirely unknown before in French literature. The large place he leaves to the dream as a means for verbal decomposition makes his work unique among contemporary French writers.

"The revolution of the surrealistes who destroyed completely the old relationship between words and thought remains of immense significance. A different association of words on planes of the spirit makes it possible for these poets to create a universe of a beauty the existence of which was never suspected before. Michel Leiris, in his experimental glossaries, departs radically from academic ideas and presents us with a vocabulary of iconoclastic proportions. André Breton, demoralizing the old psychic processes by the destruction of logic, discovered a world of magic in the study of the dream via the Freudian explorations into the subconscious strata and the automatic expression of interior currents.

"Miss Stein attempts to find a mysticism of the word by the process of thought thinking itself. In structurally spontaneous compositions in which words are grouped rhythmically she succeeds in giving us her mathematics of the word, clear, primitive, and beautiful. In her latest work this compression is of the utmost power.

"Verbal deformations have been attempted by German poets, notably

August Stramm and Hans Arp. Stramm limited himself to the problem of taking nouns and recreating them as verbs and adjectives. Arp, more ironic, played havoc with the lyric mind by inventing word combinations set against a fantastic ideology. Certain others went so far as to reproduce merely gestures by word symbols, which, however, often remained sound paroxysms."

And so on. The essay opens with a typically sublime statement, "The word presents the metaphysical problem today." The actual phenomena under discussion as nearly as I can make out are these: The surrealistes and others, including Miss Stein, proceeded with one aspect of the experiments of Mallarmé, but substituted a very lax prose rhythm for the tense poetic rhythm and difficult rhymes of Mallarmé, a substitution which involved another—that of a purely passive state of mind for the taut and nervous intellectuality of the great Symbolist. The technical instrument being therefore practically nil, and the mind entirely receptive, whatever comes into the head is set on paper and, because of the oath of brother-hood or whatever it was, stands uncorrected. The actual poetic result so far as my own perceptions have been able to penetrate, is as shapeless as water spilt on the floor, and of about the same spiritual value. There is neither the genuine psychopathic hallucination of Rimbaud, nor the dynamic control of Mallarmé—they have simply unbuttoned their spiritual vests and staretched out for a nap and called it mysticism.

One can quarrel almost indefinitely with Mr. Jolas's use of abstract terms—it is almost impossible half of the time to determine within a quarter of a dictionary what he really means—but this will not get us far enough to justify the bother. The fundamental point of his argument, so far as his argument emerges, appears to be a belief that it is desirable to submerge the conscious in the subconscious. Now even granting that the subconscious were satisfactorily defined by modern scientists, which it is not; granting that attempts at such definition were purely modern, which they are not (there are some very competent thrusts at it in St. Thomas Aquinas*); the subconscious, by any possible definition that justi

* A fact that was pointed out to me by Dr. W. D. Briggs of Stanford University

fies the term, remains a mere fringe of one's spiritual existence, in so far, at least, as one is able to enter it and deal with it in art or in life; and any doctrine that would sacrifice the entire remainder of the spirit to that one faint fringe is ipso facto wasteful and subversive. One enters that fringe, furthermore, only by departing from the center of consciousness and only in so far as one departs from that center of consciousness; that is, in so far as one approaches unconsciousness complete, or death. In cultivating the subconscious for itself one's point of approach, or ideal, therefore remains annihilation; in cultivating the fullest possible degree of dynamic and self-directed consciousness the point of approach is the most intense possible state of life. One is alive; one can choose to intensify that condition, dispense with it, or, if one is no poet, vegetate. Mr. Jolas, being a poet, has so far as I am able to discern but one choice, could he penetrate the haze of his own style and actually see what he is talking about; the abandonment of his doctrine or the suicide of a gentleman.

Let me reiterate, however, that I do not wish to deny the desirability of extending the limits of consciousness as far as possible, even into regions previously unexplored—I demand only that the poet keep what he started with and add to it. Rimbaud's hallucinations, according to his own account, were the result of a difficult, even though possibly misguided discipline. And when they were all over, he was able to write that purely logical song perhaps the finest poem he ever wrote, *Éternité*—a poem that, in a sense, sums up all his experience and the wisdom acquired by it; that faces absolutely the most appalling vision, accepts and absorbs that vision, and stands only the more strongly for having faced it; a poem that need lose very little by comparsion with the greatest of Blake or even Emily Dickinson. Mallarmé, in his *Faune,* as I shall endeavor to show presently, by starting with a logical argument about the nature of a specific experience, following it as far as possible and then letting the thread run off into revery, jerking it back into logic, and so on alternatively, was able to extend his vision from a logical and dynamic center into regions of the fringe, without losing his bearings. And even in his short poems, as in the poems of Hart Crane, the will remains present in the principle

of selection; not everything turned up is found valuable, and only the valuable is kept, and that in the most strenuously imposed of forms. And the principle of selection, though in part formal, is in part based on the logical scheme of values which one feels quite definitely at only a short distance below the surface of the poem. The method determines only the way in which that set of values will function in the particular poem.

Kenneth Burke in his narratives of a few years ago imposed this type of dream-shift in a manner openly arbitrary, and employs the same device more recently (in the *Dial* beginning August 1928) in the otherwise logical flow of his prose-pieces entitled *Declamations.* The narrative in the one case and the argument in the other involve a wider emotional range, in all likelihood, than any American prose of our day save a few things by Dr. William Carlos Williams and some of Elizabeth Madox Roberts; and the arbitrary shift serves as a sort of ironic comment imposed by the author acting almost as if exterior both to himself and his composition. Similarly the brothel-scene in Ulysses employs the mechanics of hallucination without there having been any actual hallucination on the part of the author and without depending on the momentary exigencies of language for its progress or organization. The mechanics of actual hallucination simply form, in this instance, the basis upon which the arbitrarily constructed objective form of the chapter is based. It may be in part for this reason that the chapter does not somehow entirely come off, and this same lack of ultimate fusion is usually to be found in Mr. Burke as well. I should say that to achieve formal perfection the case probably demands either a greater or vastly smaller (as in *Anna Livia Plurabelle*) degree of arbitrary manipulation. But this is almost entirely different from the sort of thing Mr. Jolas is advocating (*Anna Livia,* as he states is in the main an ideal achievement for him); as is the use of the deformed word in certain poems by Isidor Schneider and E. E. Cummings. The verbal deformation in these poets is ordinarily simply a more compact form of metaphor, frequently a compound of two words; and when their style becomes, as it sometimes does, a mosaic of such words, the result is simply a plethora of figures. E. E. Cummings carries the process of logical decomposition even

into typography, achieving a sort of visual—if the reader will pardon me—onomotapoeia. But this normally separates the poem from the last possibility of auditory perception; and as the plastic possibilities of modern type are limited to a small number of arrangements of fixed, limited, and intrinsically uninteresting forms, this variety of plastic perception is a very poor substitute for the infinitely varied and fluid possibilities of sound. The method becomes, by the very nature of its material, trickery—a species of sleight-of-hand—instead of art.

It is very likely that my own short-comings are responsible for my failure to react more than mildly to the work of Miss Stein; very intelligent people admire her greatly, even extending their admiration to her later work. If, however, the reader will attempt by way of experiment the perusal of a little highly abstract prose in a field with which he is unfamiliar, he will find himself almost grasping the meaning from sentence to sentence, but always seeming to lose a little till he goes back to pick it up—there remains constantly the sense of a steady loss of something profound. Now Miss Stein succeeds in giving me precisely this feeling of steady loss as I read her; if I study her carefully I find carefully disintegrated fragments of shrewd wit and observation, but the profoundity neither of Whitehead nor of Joyce. Her work strikes me as thoroughly amusing common sense rendered fragmentary (the act of rendering it so, of course, is part of the method of composition—I do not accuse her of anything so humorless as a post-mortem dismemberment) to produce this sensation and profit by it. It is wit subjected to the same process to which the surrealistes subject the metaphysical. My own preference for Pope and Blake remains unshakeable.

In Mr. Joyce's latest work the dream or "psychological" element is unmistakeable. It penetrates the entire texture of the thing. Any attempt to evaluate the new work on the basis of the small part of it so far published is futile, but, momentarily, it is interesting to consider the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* episode as a complete work. It has been published separately, seems complete in itself, and so far as the surface glaze is concerned is unequaled in modern prose save by a few brief passages in the early part of *Ulysses* and by

The Destruction of Tenochtitlan, of William Carlos Williams. And yet in spite of its richness of detail, its beauty of movement, the piece remains almost purely elegiac, a modern and rather more profound version of Gray's *Elegy*:

Ah, but she was the queer old skeowsha anyhow, Anna Livia, trinkettoes. And sure he was the quare old buntz too, Dear Dirty Dumpling, foostherfather of fingalls and dotthergills. Gammer and gaffer we're all their gangsters. Hadn't he seven dams to wive him? And every dam had her seven crutches. And every crutch had its seven hues. And each hue had a differing cry. Sudds, for me and supper for you and the doctor's bill for Joe John. Before! Before! He married his markets, cheap by foul, I know, like any Etrurian Catholic Heathen in their pinky limony creamy birnies and their turkiss indienne mauves. But a milkidmass who was the spouse? Then all that was was fair. In Elvenland? Teems of times and happy returns. The same anew. Ordovico or viricordo. Anna was, Livia is, Plurabelle's to be. Northmen's thing made southfolk's place but howmulty plurators made eachone in person? Latin me that, my trinity scholard, out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan. *Hircus Civis Eblanensis!* He had the buckgoat paps on him, soft ones for orphans. Ho, Lord! Twins of his bosom. Lord save us! And ho! Hey? What all men. Hot? His tittering daughters of. Whawk?

Can't hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice bawk talk. Ho. Are you not gone ahome? What Tom Malone? Can't hear with bawk of bats, all the liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foes won't moos. I feel as old as yonder elm. A tale told of Shaun or Shem? All Livia's daughtersons. Dark hawks near us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone. Tell me of John or Shaun? Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of? Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me elm! Night night! Tell me tale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night!

The elegiac mood and the hallucinated state alike attain here about their greatest possible achievement. The piece is one of the best bits of evidence that I know that the cultivation of the subconscious for its own sake tends definitely toward the elegiac, because of its passivity, its negatitve attitude, even on the part of a non-elegiac writer. Mr. Joyce can afford the luxury so far as he

himself is concerned; but a school of writers that would attempt to set up this attitude as that ultimately desirable, is merely the excrescence of contemporary nihilistic tendencies, of which Mr. Eliot is one of the chief fountain-heads. Mr. Eliot represents the decadence of an old logic, or rather an attempt to revive the decadence of an old logic—he is in his poetry, at least, still trying feebly to prove his own worthlessness, the worthlessness of man. The dream-poets accept this evaluation without a squirm and proceed on that basis in a state of mind that refuses to make any distinction between active and passive experience, between village Cromwells and the real article, between Othello and Sheamus and Shaun. There is no possibility of the bitter tenseness arising from the sharply defined anguish of the superior individual, the active and complex and powerful individual, awake in all his cells, that we find in the poetry of Donne and of Emily. It is for this reason that I believe the heroic prose of *The Destruction of Tenochtitlan* to be superior to the elegiac prose of *Anna Livia Plurabelle,* superior, in all likelihood, by at least a narrow margin, to any other prose of our time and to most of the verse.

V. *The Alternation of Method*—A poem may be a development of a single mood and yet alternately employ two different methods. Thus in Mr. Eliot's *Gerontion* we have a single mood developed through an alternating logical and psychological sequence such as I have already described in the *Faune.* Once in a while the scattered method enters for a few lines, but not for long—it is mainly a way of piling up evidence in the argument. In this particular poem, as I have already said, the logic seems to me more a matter of grammar than of metaphysics, but the poem will do as an example, the better as examples are rare. The method is likely to make for a good deal of obscurity until one has fathomed its more objective aspects, and then the obscurity vanishes. So far as it has been employed as a definitely and carefully developed mode of composition, it appears to be extremely modern, and, on the whole, rather rare. The earliest (and most intricate) example with which I am acquainted is Mallarmé's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune.*

One may find elsewhere a change of method now and then within a given poem, but it is seldom timed or calculated and

hence constitutes a weakness—it usually indicates an inability to continue with that which was undertaken. Also, one often finds one relationship between the stanzas of a poem and another within them, but this is also somewhat different; for here each stanza is a unit, and the poem is another, and each is built upon a certain method throughout, whereas in *Gerontion* or the *Faune* the logical and psychological passages are not units, the only unit being the entire poem.

There are in the *Faune* two distinct sets of alternating movements which overlap in a curious fashion and produce the feeling of extraordinary difficulty and involved implication which almost any reader is bound to have until he shall have read the poem ten or a dozen times. The first set consists in the alternation of the narrative and logical elements, the narrative being indicated by italics. But as this alternation progresses through the poem, it appears to move—at times almost to flicker—back and forth across the dividing line between consciously directed thought and organized recollections on the one hand, and the wandering thoughts and images of revery on the other. The account of the faun's dream ought, one might think at first sight, to produce the subliminal experience, and the commentary the purely conscious; but the faune, in looking back into his sleep, is trying as hard as he is able to organize his dream into some sort of rational sequence, and, for the most part, he succeeds—whereas the preocccupation with the bare facts of his dream frequently causes absent-minded wandering in the midst of his comment. And the fact that both the conscious and the half-conscious hover extremely close to the dividing line throughout the entire poem, makes it very difficult at times to say exactly where one begins and the other ceases. The "psychological" element is here represented not by a state of dream or insanity, as in the poem from Rimbaud or the passage from Joyce, but by a state of revery, which is much closer to organized thought, and which is frequently closely bound up with it; and the organized thought, the comment, is so perturbed by the proximity of the other that it flickers unconscionably.

This form offers, it should be evident, an extremely subtle and

complicated instrument of perception, and an instrument particularly adapted to the poet aware to the utmost of the modern philosophic dilemmas. It presents a means of beginning with the concrete experience and working outward as far as one's mentality and sensibilties permit, at a time when no objective scheme of abstract values available will stand very carefule scrutiny. Donne, to resort to metaphor, was able to see himself and his experience, in the midst of a definitely mapped and defined scheme of universe and universal values; and by means of lines from that outer skeleton converging inward, he was able to define and locate his own experience in a definite and absolute fashion. Donne's position is now very difficult to assume, as his outline of values to find. The experience only remains; and the poet today is forced to begin with his experience and erect upon it as firm and universal a scheme of values as he is able.

VI. *The Alternation of Mood*—One may have a poem based upon a single method but upon a double mood—that is, the poem shifts back and forth between two or more moods as it progresses. Or two moods may hover for an instant upon a single image, through contrasting imagic and symbolic values, as I have shown in discussing the symbol*. Thus Laforgue, using the scattered method, normally alternates rapidly between a sort of tragic nostalgia and a mockery of such a feeling in such a world. Browning, in *The Bishop Orders His Tomb,* employs a comparatively ponderous double mood running the course of a more or less "psychological" sequence. The double mood appears in a fairly simple form in Villon; is picked up and brought to a remarkable degree of speed and intricacy by Gautier; is occasionally used in a somewhat similar fashion but upon very different material a few years later by Corbière; and it reaches its most complicated development and greatest rapidity in certain poems by Laforgue toward the close of the nineteenth century. In contemporary American work it is prominent in certain poems by Miss Marianne Moore and by Mr. T. S. Eliot, and in a few poems, especially early ones, by Dr. Williams. It appears not to have been used consistently in the lyric

* *Notes on the Mechanics of the Image,* in Secession No. 7.

before Gautier, and to have been so used first by the French.* One occasionally finds a change of mood at the end of an earlier poem, or sometimes within one, apparently for the sake of the shock; but the artistic value of such a shock is doubtful, as it destroys the unity of the poem. The double mood proper consists of a series of such shocks properly tempered and finely timed, which in itself constitutes a new kind of unity. The moods need not appear in identical quantities, but the relationship of quantities and the rate, or rather rhythm, of alternate appearance should be consistent.

The trouble with this form, especially as it appears in the work of Gautier, Laforgue, Miss Moore, and Eliot, is that it tends to an interpretation of the universe in black and white and without perspective—it is an art of silhouette, pure and simple, without sufficient capacity for complication and subtlety. It endeavors to compress all experience into the limits of one arbitrary alternative. To read a few poems only by any one of these writers gives one the feeling that they are complex and sophisticated—their use of language is unquestionably astute. To read all of them reveals them quite simply as arrested adolescents of various degrees of fineness. Life is not to be summed up by mocking at one's weakness for romanttic stage-trappings, as in the case of Gautier; at one's sentimentality, as in the case of Laforgue; at one's neighbors' breaches of etiquette, as in the case of Miss Moore; nor at one's moral and metaphysical frustration, as in the case of Mr. Eliot. The program of the last-named poet is easily the most complex of the

* The aspect of 17th century "wit" in English that seems to approximate this trick is in reality a far subtler phenomenon. Instead of alternate moods one has a fused complex of moods, all being present throughout the poem. Thus the grotesque passion of Donne's *Go and catch a falling star,* or the concentration of religious mysticism in a pun that one finds in Crashaw's poem, *The Recommendation.* If there is real alternation here, in any event, it is between more than two simple elements (usually) and is too rapid to be perceptible—as atomic vibration offers the illusion of static matter. But such an explanation sounds to me like a figure of speech. At any rate this condition appears to me to be approximated in that almost incomparably magnificent poem of Corbière, *La Rapsode Foraine;* and Miss Moore once in a while would appear to be moving toward it, but her ideational and general experiential background seems to be too limited to let her get quite far enough. In the symbolists and post-symbolists wit is an instrument normally used for the destruction of a positive attitude temporarily assumed in order that it may be destroyed: the whole process is negative. In the metaphysical poets, satire, when it occurs, is a part of a positive attitude.

four, but his sensitivity, unfortunately, the thing that should give his program flesh and blood, is based in altogether too large a degree upon other poets. The actual achievements of Miss Moore on one or two occasions—notably in *Black Earth* and *A Graveyard*—get rather outside her usual formula and approach something very close to major poetry.

The method has a larger field in drama. Drama, as we ordinarily conceive it, is composed of a set, or several sets, of conflicting and alternating moods that are ultimately resolved or brought to a state of balance. The plot is frequently disclosed by an arrangement of events that closely resembles the scattered method. That is, not all the connections are evident until all the gaps are filled, and then the entire situation becomes clear—it is a sort of compromise, of one sort and degree or another, between scattered and narrative procedure. Certain simpler forms may follow a purely narrative method, and other simple forms may be purely lyrical and scattered —that is, in this case there is no plot to be exposed, but merely an emotion of greater or less complexity. Occasionally, as in a few brief modern poetic dramas, there occurs a psychological sequence from time to time. The relation between fragments of conversation is commonly scattered, but may be logical, narrative, or psychological.

In the Japanese Noh play *Tsunemasa,* as we have it in the Pound-Fenollosa versions, there is, curiously enough, but a single mood, in the person of Tsunemasa, himself, supported by a priest and chorus who do nothing but reflect, interpret, and explain him. It is, in reality, a semi-narrative lyric prepared for the stage. In Vergil's first *Eclogue,* there is a very simple example of opposing moods: Meliboeus, who has been dispossessed by the soldiers, complains to Tityrus, who has retained his lands through a special dispensation from Octavian, and compares his fortune with that of Tityrus, who, in turn, speaks of his happiness and good luck. A large part of the mood of Tityrus is here put into the mouth of Meliboeus in the course of his comparison of their fortunes, but it remains none the less distinct. The two moods resolve very gracefully into one in the final speech of Tityrus:

hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem
fronde super viridi. . . .
iam summa procul villarum culmina fument
maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.

This *Eclogue,* in its preoccupation with detached emotion rather than action, and in the remarkable beauty of its movement, reminds one greatly of the shorter Noh plays.

These two plays are of extreme simplicity, however, as compared to most of the world's great drama. A slightly more complex arrangement may be seen in Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen.* Here we have four characters, who seem to fall into two opposing groups—Nora and Michael against Dan and the Tramp. The progress of the play breaks these two groups, scatters them to the four corners of the square, so to speak, and ends with a new grouping—Nora and the Tramp against Dan and Michael. In some of the longer Elizabethan plays one finds a group of minor moods or characters opposed to a major mood, or filling the part of a major mood in some such relationship as that existing in *The Shadow of the Glen.* One may find two or more groups opposed to each other, each containing a major mood of its own and several minor ones working in their own scheme within their own orbits. Another fact worth noting is that a major character may shift from one major mood to another, two major characters, perhaps, changing places for a time. This occurs for instance in the character of Synge's Deirdre. If a major character slips temporarily into a minor mood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is very likely to be a humorous one, though not necessarily. It is this complexity of mood and of movement that gives the drama of this period in England, and to some degree in Spain, a great deal of its emotional turmoil—a turmoil that, in the great plays, at least, seethes rhythmically—and its universality, its sense of an entire world experienced and given form.*

* One might point out here that the tragedies of Shakespeare are no more "chaotic" than those of Racine, nor are they based on a different structural principle —they are simply a degree or two more complex.

The Question of Imagism

In an essay entitled *A Retrospect,* contained in his volume *Pavannes and Divisions* (Knopf: 1918) Mr. Ezra Pound has this to say of Imagism:

"There has been so much scribbling about a new fashion in poetry, that I may perhaps be pardoned this brief recapitulation and retrospect.

"In the spring or early summer of 1912, H.D., Richard Aldington, and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

"1. Direct treatment of the thing, whether subjective or objective.

"2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

"3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome.

"Upon many points of taste and of predilection we differed, but agreeing upon those three positions we thought we had as much right to a group name, at least as much right, as a number of French 'schools' proclaimed by Mr. Flint in the August number of Harold Munro's magazine for 1911.

"The school has since been 'joined' or 'followed' by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification. Indeed vers libre has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it. It has brought faults of its own. The actual language and phrasing is often as bad as that of our elders without even the excuse that the words are shoveled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound. Whether or not the phrases followed by the followers are musical must be left to the reader's decision. At times I can find a marked metre in vers libres, as stale and hackneyed as any pseudo-Swinburnian, at times the writers seem to follow no musical structure whatever. But it is, on the whole, good that the field should be ploughed. Perhaps a few good poems have come from the new method, and if so it is justified."

A scrutiny of this program in these colder days discloses in the first place a rather amusing lack of actual meaning, and in the second place an absolute lack of innovation, so far as theory is concerned, except in the case of metre; and so far as "free" verse was

concerned it assumed almost at once in the work of H.D. and Mr. Pound, as well as in the work of a few more distinguished practitioners not officially of their "school," as great a schematization and rigidity as any of the forms of the past. And had it not, it would have been a failure; it was the discovery of a new metric system that really makes this movement important, not, as the journalists and the more impassioned and younger emigrants would have us believe, an attempt to do without a system. Mr. Aldington's verse became almost at once a sort of limp blank verse, with little or no organization from line to line. The more successful "imagist" poems of H. D. and Mr. Pound—H. D.'s *Orchard,* for example, or Mr. Pound's *Fish and the Shadow*—represent definite rhythmic units based on smaller units, and the line can be scanned.

As to the first and second "principles," number one excludes certain of the more obvious and less valuable species of symbolism; number two is a rather commonplace principle of style which nearly any admirable poet observes and which there was no great need to mention unless the "school" felt themselves particularly haunted by the ghosts of Holmes and Whittier. A. Lowell, of course, forced herself among them in the flesh, but that was later. Mr. Aldington quite obviously obeyed neither of these rules. His most highly praised poem, *Choricos,* is merely a paraphrase of Swinburne's *Garden of Proserpine,* without the latter's metrical firmness and surge. And Swinburne's poem, in turn, is a paraphrase of a rather better poem by Christina Rossetti, toward the concision and simplicity of which Alice Corbin reverts in her revision of Aldington's poem according to imagist principles, which begins, *The old songs die.* Mr. Pound and H.D. obeyed their own rules to a reasonable degree: as Mr. Pound observes, the journalistic camp-followers, Miss Lowell, Mr. Fletcher* and others, obeyed neither these dicta nor any other dicta and are chiefly responsible for the current theory that imagist poetry was of necessity concerned with details of sensation registered in rather casual prose.

* Mr. Fletcher shortly saw the error of his ways, and abandoned them for a more ambitious, semi-Whitmanian type of verse that he seems to me unable to manage. But his reform was honest and based on the very sound critical intelligence that he displays in his prose. Still more lately, perhaps influenced by Hardy, he seems to be moving toward a power and dignity that may prove important.

There is nothing in these rules to preclude the possibility of abstract statement, and such statement can be found both in H.D. and in Ezra Pound. Its scarcity, or rather the scarcity of very profoundly organized emotions, must be laid, I suspect, rather to the intellectual limitations of the two poets rather than to the limitation of their program. Poets of the imagist fringe, who influenced and were influenced by the imagists, mainly because of personal associations, among them William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, John Rodker, and Wallace Stevens, abound in such statements. If, again, one often feels a lack of formulated doctrine behind most of the work of these people, it can hardly be laid to their medium. Mr. Allen Tate in writing of my verse in the book section of the *New Republic* for March 21, 1928, disposes of the matter in rather too high-handed a fashion: "But the imagists were going to make a new language—with a manifesto. They failed. And they failed because language is not merely vocabulary. They failed because a poetry of the image (could it exist) reduces to the parallel exercise of five separate instruments (the five senses) which cannot, without violence done the first principle of imagism, be integrated. For Imagism, as it was set forth in the official dogma, contained its own contradiction. It held out for the fresh visualization of objects—that is to say, for the creation of metaphor—but it ignored the total vision, the imagination, by means of which the raw perceptions are bound together into a whole. The Imagist's poetry lacked meaning; though some of their work, the early poems, for example, of John Gould Fletcher, achieved a kind of success with the merely pictorial and decorative possibilities of the image." Mr. Tate's remark about "the first principle of imagism" is quite simply and obviously untrue; and his remark about the "total vision" is beside the point—the imagist program does not exclude the total vision, it simply never got that far, being concerned with nothing more than a few elementary principles of style. It was a bit naïve, but scarcely vicious. I do not go quite so far as Mr. Tate in damning the actual poetic product of the school, but I am willing to admit that it was not major poetry. I believe that some of it is likely to prove rather permanent, and quite justly so.

Mr. Hart Crane, who shares the views of Mr. Tate in this con-

nection, and with whom I have had the good fortune to discuss the matter in private, regards Blake's poem *The Tiger* as one of the supreme achievements of the human spirit. I pointed out to him the fact that there is not a single statement in the poem not embodied in concrete terms, that it is purely a "poetry of the image," and he was forced to acquiesce. The same is true of Mr. Crane's own poem *Repost of Rivers,* as of nearly all of his most perfectly fused work—in Mr. Crane's work, indeed, the degree of imperfect fusion is in almost direct ratio to the degree of abstract statement, and I believe is closely related to it. *The Tiger* and Mr. Crane's poems alike spring from a definitely organized and rather complicated doctrine. This, however, forces me to offer a brief classification of "imagistic" procedure in connection with ways and degrees of symbolization.

We have in the first place, the poem dealing with a simple concrete experience that has no ulterior significance—that is, its meaning is purely literal, regardless of the amount of related but not obviously included experience that may be awakened by it. These "correspondences," needless to say, function quite as definitely when one is sane and sober as when one is not, though the element of strangeness is less noticeable, as we are more or less accuctomed to the former condition. H.D.'s *Orchard* is such a poem; likewise the magnificient address of William Carlos Williams *To Mark Anthony in Heaven,* or Browning's *Serenade at the Villa.* One has the diametrically opposite procedure of the poem in which every detail has an allegorical interpretation. This sort of thing lends itself chiefly to obvious generalizations of no very permanent interest. In the later stages of Symbolism we often find "l'hièroglyphe enfantin," to which Baudelaire objected in general at an earlier date: the bluebirds etc. of Maeterlinck, and other such sleight-of-hand paraphernalia. If the work of art merely "stands for" something, let us by all means have the thing it stands for, instead of bothering with the art. But if it *is* something, related to but different from experience, and organizing experience into something finer more accurate than it was, then the art is worth having. Whitehead says somewhere that the trouble with abstractions is that by the very nature of things, they are incomplete, they are abstracted from

something; and that something is then discarded, though in many circumstances it may be all-important. Allegory at its weakest, and to some extent in all of its manifestations, is merely an attempt to give concrete body to an abstraction, *while preserving the limitations of the abstraction.* It does not attempt to redissolve the abstraction into the original body of experience and then concentrate the experience, for then the whole process would be self-destructive—there would be no allegory. The sound work of art, however, is as far as possible (allowing for such obvious facts as that language itself represents a degree of abstraction, which a poet overcomes in so far as he is a poet) not an abstraction from experience but a concentration of experience, and the universality of its scale of emotional reference is pretty much in proportion to the degree in which one *cannot* draw from it abstract conclusions.

But Blake's *Tiger* is a case in which pure allegory is completely successful. The reason probably lies in the fact that Blake was not himself an allegorist, but a visionary, and that the allegorical interpretation is in a large part our own addition. That is, the God of this Universe was doubtless for Blake a supreme Tiger, and the vision simple and direct. He described the Tiger in the sky as a less fortunate mortal might describe a tiger in the jungle.

In between these two types of imagery lies the poem of some degree of allegorical purport, but which cannot be interpreted allegorically in every detail. Nearly all of Mr. Crane's work falls in this region.

The value of a poem of the first type depends upon two things: the intensity and universality of the original experience and the intensity and integration of the details of perception and expression. That integration may in many—very likely in most—cases require a degree of abstract statement sprinkled along the way, and if that be the case, it is vanity to do without such statement. *The Tiger,* however, does without it quite successfully, as, I believe, do certain other poems. If, as may be the case, the value of the concrete image is evident without additional statement, the integration or lack of it is almost purely a matter of musical integration—of proportion and metre. When Mr. Tate writes that much of my poetry "hobbles along on the necessary limitation of the imagist technique" he is, I

am convinced, misplacing the blame—the trouble was that I was struggling with a half-mastered metre, which only occasionally came through. To create a new metre is a more difficult task than is commonly admitted by those who have never felt the need to run the risk. And for Mr. Tate to explain his liking for the poems that pleased him by the presence of a few abstract statements really strikes me as simplfying the poetic problem almost to the point of the ludicrous.

The three poems just mentioned as entirely unallegorical are about equally well-written; their magnitude, depending upon the range and depth of emotion involved, corresponds inversely to the order in which they are named. And this range and depth of emotion has nothing to do with the aspects of the "subject matter." Browning, addressing an orchard in bloom might have written as great a poem as his *Serenade at the Villa.* H.D., with Browning's theme, might produce an exquisite but would surely produce a minor poem. Anything may serve to crystallize experience, whether the spirit to whom that experience belongs be frail or gigantic. "A certain slant of light," entering the consciousness of Emily Dickinson, was sufficient to produce one of the most profoundly beautiful poems in English.

The value of the poem of either the pure or mixed allegorical types depends again upon the range and depth of the concept of which the "image" is the concrete symbol, and upon the intensity and integration of expression. The chief difference would seem to be that this type of thing has a better chance of being a "pure poetry of the image" because the concrete symbol is fitted a bit more arbitrarily, and hence may be fitted more neatly, to the necessarily very schematized ideation. Such things as *Serenade at the Villa,* for instance, or most of Hart Crane, implicate entire ranges of ideation and feeling that cannot be reduced to any formula save the poem itself. The purely allegorical likewise presupposes a clearly schematized set of abstract values, a luxury which we no longer possess. Blake endeavored to create one of his own, for lack of better, and in that particular activity was at best but in part successful. Hart Crane, by means of his semi-allegorical method, continually and most often successfully attempts to evade an unequivocal statement of

this sort by constantly running his allegory ashore on the specific. He is an example of a soul with a natural taste for the schematized and abstract being forced by his milieu toward the specific; and it is on the specific that by far the greater part of the important poetry of the last eighty years has been based in the main. Personally, I believe that the greatest poetry will be possible if this fact is realized and admitted as a basis of procedure: it is the poetic equivalent of the humanistic attitude defended by Mr. Babbitt in the *Forum* for January 1929 (and elsewhere). Mr. Babbitt writes: "In direct proportion as one develops the critical temper, one is forced to base one's convictions, not primarily on any tradition, but on the immediate data of consciousness." This "critical temper," as Mr. Babbitt insists, is the outcome of education and other strenuous discipline—it is utterly the reverse of the humanitarian's naive faith in his own natural rightness. In *Rousseau and Romanticism,* Mr. Babbitt stresses the moral effect of example at all social levels. This I believe to be sound; and the most valuable example is the poet, because, through the experiential contagion of his form, he dynamizes the consciousness of the individuals at the highest levels. The poet is face to face with his own soul: if he fails, as Mr. Eliot has done, it is a case of personal inadequacey; and it becomes the duty of the critic to disinfect him, lest the contagion spread indefinitely. Mr. Eliot's plaintive search for a dogmatic religion is a begging of the question.

The poetry of the specific experience still makes possible that most important of artistic phenomena, the relation of the balanced and unified individual to the facts of existence. It admits not only of adventures in the mystical dimension, such as those of Mr. Crane, but also in the more purely human or ethical. William Carlos Williams functions a little too completely in the latter, as Mr. Crane in the former; there is a certain incompleteness about both of them. The limitations of Allen Tate, to complete the trio of living American poets who excite me most, are, in so far as I feel them and as far as I can penetrate, inadequacies of style, which he ought eventually to overcome. *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* offers the most ambitious method I know for making the most of the modern situation, but it is so elaborate that it is likely to be used very seldom by lyric

poets and may too easily tend to diffusion rather than concentration. The Imagist School, so far as its practice was concerned, and for the most part as regards its first two principles, was nothing but a superficial recognition of this tendency on the part of two exquisite minor poets and one indifferent poet; and inasmuch as their recognition was inadequate and their contribution in no wise definitive, the name Imagist had better be dropped from the critical vocabulary. The contribution of these poets to modern poetry in general, aside from certain individual and admirable poems, was mainly metrical, and if they must have a name, and some one can think of one, they had better be named for their metres.

Summary and Conclusion.

I have endeavored to define and evaluate the possible modes of literary expression, with especial reference to those that have appeared or been revived during the past seventy-five or eighty years. My conclusions, in brief, are that the song or "scattered" lyric may function now quite as effectively as at any time in the past, and for evidence one need look no farther than Hardy and Corbière; that the poem of the specific experience is the modern equivalent of the logical structure of the metaphysical school, being essentially the same thing and possessing potentially all the same virtues—it simply works out from instead of working in toward, the center, the experience; that the modern attempt to revive the Metaphysical School is almost purely syntactical, and is necessarily syntactical, as no adequate metaphysic exists unless one is able conscientously and individually to find his way back to Rome; that the psychological or dream method is definitely subversive unless modified by a strong intellectual substructure as well as a rigid technique; that the alternation of method provides a variant, subtle and perhaps of great value, upon the poem of the specific experience; and that the alternation of mood as a consistent system is a trifle childish. The drama of Shakespeare is a species of poem of specific experience developed to a high degree of detail and complexity, and if certain secondary difficulties could be overcome, I see no reason why such a drama should not reappear. One difficulty is purely technical—the problem

of metre—and the other is partly so. Blank verse as the metrical instrument is inconceivable at the present time, and rhymed verse will always be inconceiveable in English. There remains the free verse of such writers as William Carlos Williams or perhaps Ernest Walsh as a possible medium. The verse of Ezra Pound moves too slowly for the purpose, and uses almost invariably a closed line, being thus a bit inflexible for dramatic purposes. The other difficulty is the mating of a style capable of containing the necessary high points of emotion with a type of character capable of them. In, say, the Racinian drama, the use of royalty as the subject matter of tragedy dispensed with this difficulty. Royalty was theoretically the highest point in humanity and hence capable of the greatest possible range of emotion. Kings and queens lived amid a great deal of formality, exterior solemnity, and consequently the rhetorical style in their mouths did not seem ridiculous when the emotional point was not high, and the poet was able to use the same stylistic tone throughout. To create a type of character at the present time that should offer comparable conveniences would unquestionably be very difficult, but might be possible. It would also be necessary to create a character with sufficiently strong (and unprovincial) moral feelings for some sort of dramatic motivation to be born in him. This might still be possible, but unless the lyrical poets establish attitudes of greater dignity during the next few decades than most of them seem inclined to establish at present the possibility may vanish. That the logical—Dantesque or Miltonic—epic is scarcely possible at present is a misfortune, but, if the drama could be reestablished, need not be a catastrophe. The low emotional level of prose, and the fact that the novel is essentially a democratic form, dealing with individuals of slight intrinsic interest, both make it seem unlikely that the novel will ever attain to the piston-pure magnificence of Racine.

The only poet in England who has in my opinion achieved major work since Thomas Hardy is D. H. Lawrence, whose attitude and genius in general were always unstable, abnormal, and fragmentary, and who now seems to have collapsed completely. In France, I can think of no one since M. Valéry, a poet of unquestioned genius, but who, like Hart Crane, is blind to all values save those affecting

himself as an absolutely isolated phenomenon: he is unaware of the wider range of ethical phenomena arising from the interaction of human beings. In America there is the comparably classical figure of E. A. Robinson, less interested in the purely metaphysical, more in the ethical, but with sensibilities a shade too chilled for him to rise to the level of Hardy. Of the next generation we have, as I have said, Dr. Williams; and among the young men Messrs. Tate and Crane. Mr. Yeats suffers from defects similar to those of Mr. Robinson, but almost more benumbing. Aside from the prose of Mr. Joyce, Mr. Burke, and of Miss Roberts, the works of these men remain, however, the chief major efforts of our century. No one of them will bear comparison with Thomas Hardy or Emily Dickinson, but their achievement is great, and accomplished in the face of considerable odds. It remains to be seen whether they can make sufficient headway so that seventy-five years hence it will be possible for a dramatist to think in terms comparable to those of Phèdre or Anthony.

PAUL GREEN

Tread The Green Grass

A FOLK FANTASY IN THREE ACTS AND TWO INTERLUDES. WITH MUSIC AND DUMB-SHOW

CHARACTERS

Tina Bassel, a country girl
Father Bassel
Mother Bassel
Harvey, a young farmer
Brother Caders, a country preacher
The Three Brothers, his helpers
The Young Reverend
Old Man, a mischief-maker from the woods
Old Woman, his hag
Young Davie
Old Men and *Old Women*
Middle-Aged Men and *Women*
Young Men and *Women*
Boys and *Girls*
Hoodlums
Dwarfs
Goblins
Phantoms

TIME: Several years ago. PLACE: A countryside.

ACT I *Scene* 1: A field. *Scene* 2: A forest. *Scene* 3: A farmhouse.
Scene 4: A farmhouse.
Interlude: At evening.

ACT II *Scene*: A church.
Interlude: At night

Act III *Scene*: A forest.

ACT I

SCENE 1

A wide fallow land lies stretched under the copperish glow of the autumn sun, and heath asters, goldenrod, and life-everlasting are nodding there in the aimless wind. Deep in the sky above a vulture idles motionless in his orbit, for so hazy is the air and so far away he is that like a frozen bat he seems to cling to the roof of

heaven. Around the horizon with its line of hills hangs a purplish gloom like the circle that surrounds a sleepless and unhealthy eye, seeming to enclose this wide field as a world unto itself. Across the forepart of the fallow land runs a shrub fence, wind-buffeted and cattle-bit, beyond which a gentle incline hides all but a slice of roof and the red chimney of a farmer's distant cottage. A girl comes down this incline, picking flowers and prattling to herself. She moves along hurriedly, with now and then a backward glance, as if to escape from someone. Coming through the hedge by a tall clump of goldenrod, she drops down on her knees in the shadow of the shrubbery.

GIRL—*(Running her hands over the bent clusters).* Bye-baby-bye. Who is dead? Sorrow? See the bright sunlight and the sweet sky? Everything is happy. Maybreath's in the autumn now. The little asters sing and dance in the wind. I laid my face close and heard them, and the life-everlasting holds up its head. You nod and say your prayers and weep and mourn—like sorrow by the grave ah. *(Looking behind her).* Like lying in the grave, oh, me. I'll hide with you and he can't find me. *(She lies down under the clump of goldenrod and stares upward).* Weep over me then. But I'm not dead. I'm not sad even. I'm happy. O sweet sky and happy sun! And happy, happy earth—peaceful earth. Here I might make my bed. Here I could sleep in its safe arms. Drink in its sweet breath. (*Sighing.*) Peace, peace, peace. (*Far away a farmbell rings*). Ring, drowsy bell, ring, ring, ring. Let them ring, I'll not come home. Home, home? That is not my home.

(HARVEY, *a young farmer, comes over the hill at the rear, carrying a rake in his hands.*)

HARVEY—*(Calling).* Tina! Tin-in-a! Dinner is ready! The bell has rung! (*He looks about him, up and down the hedge*). Your mother will worry. Come home, Tina! *(He goes off at the right, his voice growing fainter.)* Come home, Tina, the bell has rung!

TINA—*(Chuckling).* Hah, he coldn't find me. He can never find me. Such a fool he is. *(Laughing in a strained, half-foolish way.)* My face and hair and eyes he looks for. These he kisses and holds tight. He takes them in his arms, and never sees me, never feels me. This is me. *(She lays her cheek against the earth.)* Let them sit to the table and eat now. Pork and potatoes and late garden greens. There she comes with the brown pitcher of buttermilk. Watch, Mother, don't stumble over the doorstep. And Harvey, look how he eats and eats, and the milk will swell him out and

out, and he will look like a frog. *(Gaily.)* A great big toad-frog that hops along at candle-light. *(Singing.)* Hopping over the wide earth with no home. Poor Harvey. . . . Sweet earth, sweet earth. *(She sits up on her haunches and looks away to the west.)* Oh, it is late and I was going to the hermit's little house in the hills. Yes, I'll go there. *(Stopping.)* No, the sun is setting and it's too far to Molly's Bright. Every day I say I'll go. Tomorrow I will, I surely will. *(Clapping her hands.)* And such strange sights I'll see there. Miz Barnes saw it. A snake in a cage and a bird that sits in the rafters talking of the Holy Ghost. Ah me. *(She lies down again, chanting sing-song.)* Tomorrow—tomorrow—tomorrow. Tomorrow I'll go to the hermit's house. *(A thrush sets up his song deep in the hedge.)* Come, pretty birdie, come. Make sweet music, sweet as the mocking-bird. The mocking-birds have quit singing in the orchard. It's coming cold weather now. Then you'll not sing either. *(Whistling.)* Pshwee-wee-wee-wah. Pshwee-wee-wee-wah. Now I'll sleep and sleep and sleep, and you be mother over me. Pretty dreams come again. Come, pretty birdie, come. *(Singing.)* Let them pour down over me. Let it snow them out of the sky over me, hiding me away, keeping me in sleep, warm sleep—leaves—and no spring to melt them from my hair and eyes. Ring around the rosie—hush, hush, we'll all tumble down (*Her voice trails off.)* Pretty birdie—ba——

The minutes pass, the sun falls farther to the west, and once more the drowsy ringing of the farm bell is heard. TINA is asleep and dreaming, and out of the gloom of her dream, at the left, come creeping an old man and woman, a strange Punch-and-Judy pair, dressed in wretched yellowish-green clothes. They slip along by the hedge more like furtive animals of the fields than human beings. The old man's bearded face is set wth a huge beaked nose, and he wags his head leeringly from side to side in a grotesque grimacing. His hair is matted and tangled above his shoulders in a flaring discolored brush. Behind him comes the old woman, shrewish and thin as a rail, clothed in a dirty clinging wrapper. Her face is shriveled and dried and burnt to the brown toughness of leather, beneath which remains a kind of disgusting pastiness. Her hair hangs down her back in a dull lifeless mane, and the whites of her darting eyes show like a mean mare's as she approaches the sleeping girl. She catches her partner by the hand and they bow over TINA, peering hard at her face. The old man chortles with pannish glee as the old woman picks up the girl's shining hair and rubs it between her hands. Then they nod and gesticulate at each other, making passes over the sleeping girl as if in an incantation. The old man points to the hills and the old woman nods. TINA rises and as if obeying their will starts stiffly away with them. Her eyes closed.

HARVEY is heard calling beyond in the fields. They stop at the sound of the voice, and the girl sinks down again on the ground. The calling comes nearer. A woman's voice also calls. The two bend low behind the hedge and waddle off the way they came. HARVEY and FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL appear over the rise. They go up and down the hedge calling.

HARVEY—Tina!

FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL—(*Old and weather-worn*). Child! Tina!

(HARVEY *comes through the hedge and sees* TINA *stretched upon the earth.)*

HARVEY *(Throwing his rake violently behind him.)* Help here!

FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL—*(Peering through the hedge.)* Have mercy upon us! *(They fall upon their knees, their voices rising in a wail.)* She's dead!

HARVEY—Tina, honey, this is Harvey. *(They rub her face and hands and moan over her.)*

TINA—*(Sitting up with a giggle.)* I've been asleep.

FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL—Praise the Lord!

TINA I was tired—I heard the birds singing so sweetly. *(Terrified.)* Oh, such a dream! An old man and woman came to carry me away. *(She clings to her mother.)*

MOTHER BASSEL—*(Weeping in happiness.)* Thank the Lord, the blessed Lord!

FATHER BASSEL—Amen.

HARVEY—*(Foolishly happy.)* You're safe now, we found you.

FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL—*(Seizing* TINA *by the hands and pushing her through the hedge.)* Come away—quick, come home.

HARVEY—(*Hovering about her like a mother.*) Don't hide away, Tina. Don't do that.

MOTHER BASSEL—Come home, come home.

HARVEY—Supper is growing cold.

FATHER BASSEL—*(Wiping his eyes tremblingly.)* Home, home, safe home.

TINA—(*Mechanically as she looks away to the hills.*) I'll go home now. Home, safe home.

(With their arms around her they go over the rise, HARVEY'S *huge form behind like a protecting father over them.)*

Scene 2.

In the yellowing-green woods on the brow of the cliff is a cleared grassy space, with an upright boulder near the center. At the edge of the clearing to the left is a rough promontory of rock, on the shoulder of which squats a little bramble-covered cabin. Rough steps lead up to a low door in the front. Over the cliff and spread wide below are the valley and river and level countryside. There in the mellow sunlight of the afternoon the cottages of the farmers shine like tiny dolls' houses set among clumps of trees in the middle of green and fruitful farms. The hedges and roads show like strips of sable and silver, and here and there the black dot of a vehicle can be seen moving along. In a knolled grove of trees the little country church gleams white as a maid's apron a-Sunday, with its pin-point spire stuck demurely heavenward.

There is the noise of someone stirring in the underbrush at the right and presently Tina comes stealthily out into the clearing. She stares about her as if both frightened and intrigued by the droll little house and scene around. She carelessly begins picking flowers here and there, all the while keeping her eye on the closed door and making her way indirectly nearer and nearer to it. At last she gives a low whistling call, but no answer comes from within. Presently she halloos, gently at first and then more loudly. Inside the house a bird sets up a low idiotic gabbling.

Tina—(*Aghast.*) What is that! (*Softly with an enraptured smile.*) The bird is talking about the Lord. (*Listening.*) In the beginning was the word—and—He has stopped. (*Calling.*) Hoo—ah, hoo—ah! Anybody home? (*Gingerly mounting the steps.*) Are you at home, Mister Man? (*But neither man nor the bird answers her. She chuckles.*) I'll slip in and see the snake and that talking bird. (*With her hand on the latch she turns and looks behind her.*) There's nothing to hurt me here. (*With a prattling laugh.*) What a funny place. There's the stone altar where they sing and dance in the moonlight. That's right, that's right. And the fairies come and dance with them, old women tell you so. They know all about it. (*Turning again to the door.*) This is Tina I slipped away from Harvey again. I've come to see you. I shan't hurt you. It's nobody but me. Old man! Old woman! Mister Snake and Miz Bird.

(*The door is opened swiftly and a curly-haired young fellow sticks his face out.*)

Young Man—Hoo-ah!

Tina—(*Bounding away and stopping with her hand lightly on the boulder.*) Lord a-mercy! Who are you!

Young Man—Har-har-har! (*Wagging his head and staring about the world, he closes his eyes and sings.*)

My name is young Davie and listen ye well,
I first lived in heaven and now live in hell——
Tra—la—la—la in hell!
My pa was a goblin, my mother a shrew,
They christened me Satan with witches brew——
Tra—la—la—hah—hah—hah
Witches brew.

(He thumbs his nose at her and with a burst of laughter slams the door shut. Tina *stares after him, a smile breaking over her face.)*

Tina—(*Wonderingly.*) A dream. (*Whispering.*) A pretty dream. Now this is the stone where they pray. (*Tapping the stone gently and murmuring to herself.)*

The worm leapt up, the worm leapt down,
She plaited round the stone.

For a while Tina stands lost in wonder. In the woods far off to the left the clamor of barking dogs and hootings burst forth. The pursuit draws nearer, and Tina hides behind the jutting rock and house. Presently the old man and old woman appear on the edge of the promontory at the left, gesticulating, mouthing and looking behind them. Clambering like two grotesque buzzards down the rocky ledge, they mount to the little door. From within come the mocking laughter and singing of Young Davie. The two old creatures try the door handle and then nod laughingly to each other. Waddling over to the upright boulder, they drop down behind it exhausted.

Tina—(*Exultantly.*) They're praying, I'll help them pray.

She starts forward and then draws back as the clamor of the hoodlums bursts over the ledge and the grinning malicious faces of boys and youths are stuck through the bushes. Eyeing the two bowed creatures in astonishment, the gang moves quickly outward, sicking their dogs at them, pelting them with stones and twirling their sticks threateningly above their heads.

Hoodlums—Sic 'em! Ketch 'em, ketch the old hussies!

The dogs circle warily about the fugitives, and the boys as if growing suspicious of hocus-pocus gather in a group, mumbling and whispering among themselves. Then after a moment they grip their clubs and start towards the old man and woman.

Tina *(Rushing between them.)* Let them alone. Go away from here!

Hoodlums—Lord a-mercy, mad too! Hooah, running loose in these woods!

TINA—They're saying their prayer. Let them alone.

HOODLUMS—Hee-hee-hee. Come on, young lady, we'll take you home. We won't let 'em hurt ye. (*The old man, as if emboldened by Tina's presence rises and goes staggeringly towards them, making his uncouth gestures. The old woman follows behind.*)

HOODLUMS—(*Shrieking.*) Devils! Devils! We know it!

The dogs begin to whimper and steal away under the old man's baleful stare. Young Davie runs down out of the cabin and with a stick falls upon the ruffians, whacking them on the back and cracking their heads. The raggle taggle crew scuttle away through the woods. The old man and woman shake their fists in curses after them.

YOUNG DAVIE—Hoo-ah! Hoo-ah! (*Braggingly he cavorts with hops and bounds above the clearing.*)

TINA—(*Clapping her hands like a child.*) Hoorah! Hoorah! Now dance and sing. I'll be a fairy and dance with you.

(*She takes them by the hand, and the three circle around the boulder following her like children playing a game.* TINA *sings a play song and the others, nodding and winking knowingly at one another, swing their hands and follow her indulgently round and round.*

Sing around and dance around,
Lo, the dead sleep underground,
Meefy-mebble-mabble-mass,
While the dew is on the grass.
From the holly birds do sing,
Ting-a-ling-ling, ting-a-ling.

(*With unconscious brusqueness she falls upon her knees and the others watching her sharply do likewise.*) Now we bow before thy altar asking thee to come. O Spirit of the woods and fields, thou hast spoken to me with thy voice. Answer again in this holy place. (*Before them she sees a misty grayishness rising in the valley and obscuring the sun, and a greenish light that slowly exudes from the trees around and over the scene. The figures at the altar take on a corpse-like unearthliness, and the gleefulness of* YOUNG DAVIE'S *face grows heightened and set in a sort of malicious and devilish mask which looks saintlike to her.*) O beautiful light! Beautiful

world! Beautiful—— Listen, Listen! (*She hears a low rumble of thunder in the void beyond the cliff, sounding like a deep groan underground.*) Sing and dance and be happy. Our God sends us his sign.

(*A tall young rustic, a sort of country preacher it might be, comes from around behind the house and stands watching them. He is about thirty years old or more, dressed in ill-fitting clothes and with a sad and pensive face.*)

Young Reverend—(*Softly.*) Father, Mother.

Young Davie—Jesus Christ is home again. Har—har—har! (*The* Young Reverend *moves over and looks down at the* Old Man *and* Old Woman *huddled by the stone. For a moment they bow as if in shame before him, and then rising abruptly go into the little house and shut the door.*)

Tina—(*Crying out.*) Who is that!

Young Davie—(*Sticking out his hand with a grin.*) Welcome, Brother. (*But the* Young Reverend *stands with his head bowed upon his breast.*)

Tina—I'm afraid. (*Spinning around.*) Mother, Father, Help, help! Where am I? Everything seems like a dream! (*She stares around her horrified. Then with a scream, she throws up her hands and runs away into the woods at the right.* Young Davie *stretches his mouth in great gapes of soundless laughter. Spitting in his hands he whirls about and follows after her. He has hardly disappeared, when the* Young Reverend *likewise follows.*)

Scene 3.

Tina sits by the kitchen window in her father's house, leaning her arms on the sill and gazing out towards the west where the sun is near to setting. A pot is boiling on the stove in the corner of the room, and the bread bakes in the pan. Outside, the maples and elm trees by the house stand transfigured in the light that streams up the sky, and each separate blackened leaf is surrounded by a lacy golden glow. In the background are her father's fields of cotton and corn, ending in a low dark pine forest down yonder, beyond which the fallow land begins. A mile away is the river, and the bluffs surmounted by tall poplars, sycamores and ash trees now yellowed far into autumn. For a long while the girl contemplates the scene before her. The sun gets nearer to the tops of the trees and the chickens come up under the window and cluck at her. With a childish prattling ta-ta-ta she bends out and clucks teasingly back at them. But now in place of laughter of voice the tears gush

to her eyes and she lays her head on her arms weeping. The minutes pass, the clucking of the chickens dies away, the bread begins to burn on the stove and still she remains bowed in the window like a symbol of grief known in the old school tableaux of her neighborhood.

As a heavy step scrapes against the block outside the kitchen door she rises hastily and takes the bread from the griddle. HARVEY enters, dressed in his Sunday clothes and carrying a gun under his arm. He carries a wild flower bouquet in one hand behind him.

HARVEY—(*Merrily.*) Hunting old Bloody-Bones! Look, I brought you sump'n purty. (*He holds the flowers out to her.*)

TINA—Thankee. (*She puts them in a vase on the table.*) Old Bloody-Bones?

HARVEY—Young Bloody-Bones then.

TINA—(*Sharply.*) I appreciate them.

HARVEY—You do—ah? The same sharp talk! (*She busies herself about the stove.*)

TINA—Hah!

HARVEY—You ought not to stay in the house alone. I come by to see if all was right.

TINA—Am I starving to death? Am I freezing? I've got my clothes on. My hair is brushed and my hands are washed, the mirror says my face is clean. There's plenty to eat in the house. I left the bottle eighteen years ago, thank you.

HARVEY—Yes, and your fairies will protect you!

TINA—They might!

HARVEY—Oh, ho! And what you crying of? Oh, Tina.

TINA—(*Biting her lip.*) Now is everything well with you?

HARVEY—Thirteen new pigs yesterday.

TINA—Thirteen?

HARVEY—Oh, yes, that's a bad number.

TINA—Laugh, laugh.

HARVEY—I've got a fresh milk cow, too. 'Course the witches may cake up her milk and kill her. Ho, ho!

TINA—A young calf?

HARVEY—I said a fresh cow. (*He thumps his trousers and eyes her.*)

TINA—(*Breaking into a hollow laugh.*) Sometimes the calves die.

HARVEY—I've never lost one.

TINA—God blesses you.

HARVEY—He does. (*Soberly.*) Have you heard about me, Tina?

TINA—No.

HARVEY—I've got religion. (*Shyly.*) Yes, I'm trying to live better. (*Looking about him.*) So much was happening. Evil was everywhere. I kept dreaming of the old man and woman. It scared me. I went to God and he saved me. I sleep in peace.

TINA—Always safe—safe.

HARVEY—Poor, poor lonesome thing. I understand it now.

TINA—Listen at the preacher!

HARVEY—Yes, Listen at him! (*Angrily.*) Looks like you'd a-gone to your own brother's funeral.

TINA—I didn't want to go.

HARVEY—(*Fearfully.*) Who knows but somebody's sin caused Little Joey's death? The preacher says——

TINA—Sin, sin!

HARVEY—(*Stirring restlessly about the room.*) I can't understand it and folks at church can't understand it. There's talk about you.

TINA—(*Staring at him with bright malicious eyes.*) Help me, then!

HARVEY—(*Mumbling.*) You've got sense, you think deep. I'm ignorant. I don't know much. You may be queer, I don't know. (*Mournfully.*) I don't know what to say. I think about you and worry, but I don't know what to say.

TINA (*Mocking him.*) I understand you now— And ease heartbreak?

HARVEY—I never feel that way.

TINA—God blesses him—and when you wish you were dead?

HARVEY—I never feel that way.

TINA—(*Chanting.*) They dress up and all go to church. You pass along the road laughing and talking. I sit at home, all the time. I stay at home by myself, all the time alone. I don't want to see anybody, I don't want to be around them. It is all like winter time to me. All the birds are frozen in the fields out there. See.

HARVEY—(*Starting.*) Don't look at me so—— No, winter's not come. (*Anxiously.*) It's only autumn time. Her mind——

TINA—Yesterday I went out into the newground for goldenrods —saying——

Daff-o-down dill has now come to town
In a yellow petticoat and a green gown.

HARVEY—(*Muttering.*) Ah now.

TINA—A grey mist came over things and a greenish light around, not like the sun, Harvey, not like the sun.

HARVEY—Now, Tina!

TINA—Oh, I'm sick then. (*Coming up to him and surveying him intently.*) Not a shadow in his eye, white teeth and sweet breath. Thirty-one, and sixty years to go.

HARVEY—Stop it. (*Piteously.*) It's the evil ones again. Oh, Tina, Tina!

TINA—(*Half-singing.*) I knew her and things kept getting worse with her day after day. At night she lay alone and cried in the dark.

HARVEY—(*Laying his hand gently on her shoulder.*) I wish I could take care of you. I could help you then. (*Loudly.*) Just let me get 'em in my hands—just in my hands. I'll snatch their heads off.

TINA—He could. He's sharp and cunning. He knows. Every time he turns around he picks up a dollar. God blesses him and keeps him safe. He's got religion—safe—safe—a sharp and cunning man.

HARVEY—Are you crazy!

TINA—(*With a cry.*) They'll come with ropes and a wagon and carry me off. Behind thick walls they'll shove me.

HARVEY—(*Starting back from her.*) You act funny! O Lord!

TINA—She won't bite you, little apple. She won't hurt you. (*She bends over in her chair, hugging her knees, small and forlorn like a child.*)

HARVEY—Now there's nobody to go to but God. Everybody else is going to God.

TINA—Don't pray over me, preacher.

HARVEY—(*Giddily.*) I won't.

TINA—Don't cry, Harvey.

HARVEY—I'm no baby.

TINA—Bye, baby, bye.

HARVEY—Tina, Tina.

TINA—(*Going to the window again.*) There's the sunset.

HARVEY—I don't want to see it.

TINA—She won't cut your throat with a case-knife the way the other girl did. Look how the trees shine out under the sun. Across the river you can see the old man's hut. A tree is by it—like a gnat in the fire.

HARVEY—(*Shouting.*) Yes, and they say that's what's wrong with you! Pray to God to save you from them. They're crazy and evil.

TINA—The big poplars are all around it. (*Whispering.*) This world, Harvey, this world.

HARVEY—(*Flinging out his great arms helplessly.*) I can't get nigh her. She stays away from me. Few days ago she laughed and sang—You were happy. Now—— You're a thousand times sweeter than anybody in the world. But I can't get nigh you. You stay away—off—queer—to yourself.

TINA—(*Exultantly.*) I'm like one of the woods folks. People can't get nigh them. They run away from people.

HARVEY—Keep it out of your mind. Keep that away from you.

TINA—Little greenfaced folks with red caps on, men and women no bigger than babies. I've seen them.

HARVEY—Lord have mercy! (*He stands looking at her in astonishment.*) Miz Barnes saw 'em but she was mad!

TINA—(*Wagging her finger at him.*) Once I asked Mother didn't a little flame of fire stand in front of our doorstep the night I was born and moan and cry. Hah, hah! She said no, but she was fooling me. I heard an old woman say one night at a birth seven black cats came up in the yard and sat down on their haunches licking out their tongues like red-hot coals. The baby was stole from its cradle. They've never seen it since. The mother's hair turned gray the first night.

HARVEY—There's too much in her head. Too much worrying 'bout foolish things. I don't know much. It don't pay to know too much. It sends people to the asylum, to the grave. They worry about things, funny things. I don't worry. Brother Caders says God alone knows all. Man don't know, he says. (*Going on monotonously*

and helplessly.) Man's mind is too little, God's is bigger than the world. Trust God and leave it all to him. Brother Caders says trust God. (*He stands gazing at her mournfully with tears in his eyes.*)

TINA—(*Eyeing him, her gaze indrawn.*) Poor Harvey, he's a good man. (*Singing.*) And never more did she come back there.

HARVEY—Believe in God and pray to him. Useter I didn't pray and now I do. It helps me. I ain't ashamed of it. It helps me, it gives me peace. (*With a baffled grin.*) You're bright and sharp. You laugh at me.

(*For a long while he stares at her pensively.* MOTHER BASSEL *comes in at the left, dressed in black. Her dull seamy face is streaked with recent tears and her eyes red and swollen.*)

MOTHER BASSEL—Put five more plates at the table. (*Her hard toilworn hands are clasped beseechingly before her.*)

HARVEY—Howdy, Miz Bassel.

MOTHER BASSEL—And see there's plenty of coffee in the pot. (*She turns shortly and goes out the way she came.*)

HARVEY—Hah, they're coming to the last of the sinful. (*Sanctimoniously.*) Amen!

TINA—When I go in the woods I feel a power around me. Something in the sky and somewhere. I feel it, but it's not a church God. (*As if looking through* HARVEY *and beyond.*) Reckon that's God? Hah, hah, hah! Lord ha' mercy on the sinful!

HARVEY—I can't understand her any more.

TINA—Then something brings me back home. Like Joey's tame crow I come back. I start all over again. I help cook the supper and milk the cow. (*Slapping her face with her hand.*) Help with the supper and milk the cow.

(HARVEY *fingers his gun, turns about him in embarrassment, blowing his breath through his lips in a low aimless whistle.*)

HARVEY—I'll be going now. Your pa and ma have come.

TINA—(*Mockingly.*) Don't go. (*Coming up to him and stroking his arm.*) Poor Harvey, don't go.

(*He stamps angrily out, but in an instant reappears in the door.*)

HARVEY—Would it make any difference if I—if I was dead and gone?

TINA—Don't you do that, don't you think of it. (*Running to him and clutching his arm.*) I couldn't stand it for thinking about it. At night I couldn't stand it.

HARVEY—I'm talking about young Bloody-Bones. He's dangerous.

TINA—Him? (*Laughing.*) You better let him alone. He can tear up trees and raise the dead. Old folks tell you so.

HARVEY—The sheriff come by the church and deputized me. A crowd of us is going to meet at the crossroads. Yeh, we'll let him alone. Preachers and the law! Evil shall be bound.

TINA (*Staring at him brightly.*) Goodbye now. And when poor Harvey's head is snatched from his shoulders——

HARVEY—He's done dropping people's buckets in the well and letting their stock out of the stable at night. Look at me—huh?—And he's been breaking in people's houses. He's done laying spells on folks and saying his speeches. (*Starting.*) Spells, spells? (MOTHER BASSEL *comes in and begins setting out the supper, now and then stopping to clasp her hands in a strange pleading before her.*) Two days ago up the river he threw rocks in the church and broke up a meeting. They saw him running away through the woods.

MOTHER BASSEL—An infidel and blasphemer.

TINA—More than that—tra-la-la.

MOTHER BASSEL (*Sharply.*) Aye, he has dealings with the lower powers. His soul belongs to Satan. (*Whispering.*) Some say—say—he is Satan.

HARVEY—Last night he got in old Mr. Raymond's house. It scared the old man to death. He had a weak heart. It killed him. He kept hollering long as he had breath, "Who's that coming in my window?"

TINA—That good old man?

HARVEY—Dead. We got orders to shoot. He might shoot us, might shoot me. (*Taking out a pair of handcuffs and jangling them.*) But I'll slap these on him. (*Eyeing her.*) Suppose he shoots me?

TINA—(*Merrily.*) They won't hold him, nothing will. He can go through keyholes and under doors. (HARVEY *and* MOTHER BASSEL *look at each other, and* TINA *bursts into a laugh.*)

HARVEY—Ah-hah. (*Muttering, he slouches out of the room.*)

MOTHER BASSEL—Bring some more chairs and the bench to the table.

(TINA *stands a while thinking and then brings the chairs and slides up a bench.*)

TINA—(*Bursting out.*) Preachers are foolish!

MOTHER BASSEL—They won't hut you.

FATHER BASSEL *sticks his head in at the left. He is a plodding, grizzled old farmer with a sweet patient face and kindly watery eyes.*

FATHER BASSEL—They're coming up the lane.

MOTHER BASSEL—Tina, go straighten the room. (TINA *goes out.*)

FATHER BASSEL—(*Coming up to* MOTHER BASSEL *and putting his arm awkwardly around her.*) It's hard, hard.

MOTHER BASSEL—Hard.

FATHER BASSEL—How do she seem?

MOTHER BASSEL—She don't want the preachers talking to her.

FATHER BASSEL—Poor thing.

MOTHER BASSEL—You know what Brother Caders said.

FATHER BASSEL—No, no, I disremember. (*Wonderingly.*) I'm gitting old, I cain't remember things.

MOTHER BASSEL—Her proud spirit made God afflict us. Sin, sin, he says.

FATHER BASSEL—He did say that. (TINA *comes in and potters nervously about the stove.*) All right—all right. I'll go now, I'll go and meet them. (*He turns himself about and goes out at the left.* MOTHER BASSEL *takes the flowers from the pot and throws them out through the widow.*)

MOTHER BASSEL—It won't do today, not today.

TINA—Let the goldenrods stay.

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Folding her hands.*) Aye, they look sad.

TINA—Like people.

MOTHER BASSEL—Flowers don't suffer. (*She sighs and starts up nervously.*)

TINA (*Turning away and putting more wood in the stove.*) They bleed when you break them. They move in your hand. (*She goes to the window and stares out.*) A greenish kind of blood drips out.

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Piteously.*) Tina, Tina—Oh, my daughter!

TINA—The sun is going down, Mother, down by the hermit's house.

A PREACHER'S VOICE—(*Like a trumpet blast in the distance.*) Hallejuh! Amen!

SCENE 4.

A few minutes later FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL and the five preachers are at supper. The three brothers sit humped over on the bench at FATHER BASSEL's right. They are small squattish fellows, middle-aged with sickly ignorant faces marked by long nights of prayer, fasting and flagellations. They are dressed exactly alike in worn dark clothes and high slick celluloid collars. The youngest looks like the eldest and the eldest like the youngest. The YOUNG REVEREND is at FATHER BASSEL's left. MOTHER BASSEL sits at the end of the table opposite FATHER BASSEL. At her right sits BROTHER CADERS, mighty and hairy, a man of sixty with burning eyes and a wide flat nose through which he sniffles when he speaks. His face is pudgy, dropsical and marked by ancient signs of dissipation.

BROTHER CADERS—(*Stuffing his mouth.*) It is writ that the good man shall prosper. The bounty of the earth is his. It is written the good man shall prosper.

THE THREE BROTHERS—Like a bay tree by the waters.

BROTHER CADERS—Aye.

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Meekly.*) We give our tenth, we pray, the Lord prospers us somehow.

FATHER BASSEL—Our barn runneth over, but our house be desolate.

THE THREE BROTHERS—(*Like children conning in school.*) He prospereth the righteous. The wicked do cry in vain. (*They bend ravenously to their food.*)

BROTHER CADERS—Yea! They that sin shall suffer.

MOTHER BASSEL—Let the Lord take all we have, but save our daughter.

FATHER BASSEL—Amen.

BROTHER CADERS—Amen.

MOTHER BASSEL—Her mind is on strange things, evil things. Worse and worse. (*Calling.*) Come to supper, Tina!

BROTHER CADERS—God is strong.

FATHER BASSEL—Her mind is on them day and night.

MOTHER BASSEL—Help us.

BROTHER CADERS—We will stand between her and her sin. (*Roaring.*) Sister Tina! (TINA *comes in, looks timidly about her, stares breathlessly at the* YOUNG REVEREND *a moment, and then goes over to the window at the rear. The* YOUNG REVEREND *half-rises as if to go to her and then resumes his seat.*) Sister, in God's word it says the sinful shall die. Great suffering shall be upon them. Hah-hah-hah. Let your wit answer that, let the poet speak.

TINA—(*Flinching.*) Lord ha' mercy!

THE THREE BROTHERS—(*Swaying and punching one another with their elbows.*) Gospel! She says ha' mercy.

YOUNG REVEREND—(*In a small voice to himself.*) The good and bad they suffer alike.

BROTHER CADERS—(*With irritable dismissal.*) The righteous escape, the sinful are consumed.

(*The* YOUNG REVEREND *makes no reply but goes on picking at his food.* TINA *turns and watches him.*)

TINA—(*Furtively.*) Father and Mother are good, but they suffer.

MOTHER BASSEL—Come eat your supper.

BROTHER CADERS—(*Piercing her with his eye.*) Somebody has sinned.

(TINA *turns away and stares out through the window.* BROTHER CADERS *chuckles ominously.*) The lightning answered our prayers in the sky. This day God heard us!

TINA (*Mockingly.*) The sun has set behind a dark cloud, and the light shoots up the sky in great streaks. He heard in darkness.

BROTHER CADERS—And the rain will come.

FATHER BASSEL—The late crops were starving. The bottom corn stands perished in its tracks. Thank the Lord for his blessing. (*He mumbles a prayer to himself.*)

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Softly.*) Bless the Lord.

TINA—(*Going on now as if to herself.*) Like a great town burning up there, like the world on fire. Sorrow's cloud behind—maybe.

MOTHER BASSEL—She's never hungry. She won't eat.

TINA—Like in a book it seems with an army of people there. Banners and horses and chariots of fire.

YOUNG REVEREND—(*As if answering her.*) In an old book it says the dead do fly out of the ground and dwell around the warm sun. Three days it says they sleep in the grave. It may be so.

TINA—(*Shivering as a cloud fills the room.*) Now a cloud has swallowed up the sun. A green light is over everything.

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Plaintively.*) Oh, I wish she wouldn't. (*Her shoulders shake with suppressed sobs.*)

BROTHER CADERS (*With admonition in his voice as he taps his breast.*) In here is the true light. Speak for her, Brethren.

TINA—Hah——

FIRST BROTHER—(*Chanting his wooden testimony.*) I was lost in darkness. The sun was hid from me. I cried aloud. God answered me and sent me the true light.

SECOND BROTHER—(*Likewise.*) I ploughed and harvested in the fields, and my mind was set upon reaping for gain. Among my corn, I saw the sky grow dark. A shroud was over the sun, sackcloth and ashes covered it. It came for a sign of death unto me, and I heard a voice saying, "Repent! Repent!" I fell upon my knees, and God heard me and sent me his light. I said farewell to wife and child and all my friends and followed Jesus. Blessed Jesus!

THE OTHER BROTHERS—(*Chanting.*) Blessed Redeemer.

THIRD BROTHER—By the road one day I saw a tree covered with blood. A spell came upon me and I fell like a dead man in the sand there. An angel took me by the hand and showed me the New Jerusalem upon a hill and set my feet in the way of light.

THE OTHER BROTHERS—Amen!

FIRST BROTHER—I was ploughing in the fields and fell to beating my poor beast. Jesus rose and stood in the furrow and spoke to me and said have pity. All anger and madness went out of my heart and upon my knees I prayed. I wept and bound up the sores of my poor beast and went a-following my Lord.

THREE BROTHERS—(*Lifting up their voices.*) Amen—amen, Holy Jesus!

BROTHER CADERS—Brother.

YOUNG REVEREND—(*Timidly.*) He suffered all.

BROTHER CADERS—I was set upon the downward path. I lied and backbit, drank and gambled all my substance. (*Turning towards*

TINA.) Women in shame. Shameful women. Sin was eating away my flesh. On the brink I heard my mother praying and weeping for my soul. I saw her in the flames of suffering, standing there in her bright garments. Far off I heard her calling, "see what you've done to me?" Now I'm clean, white, my sinful leprosy is washed away. My rotting body is restored to health. Hail, blessed light!

THREE BROTHERS—Blessed light.

FIRST BROTHER—(*Again with a sanctimonious wooden chant.*) Lo, the grave opened its jaws and devoured his substance.

SECOND BROTHER—(*Likewise.*) Evil shall beget evil.

THIRD BROTHER—And scorpion beget scorpion.

BROTHER CADERS—God is our physician. He maketh whole. (*Pulling a Bible from his pocket and opening it.*) Read.

(*He pushes the book into* TINA's *hands with grim authority. She stares dully at the page. The* THREE BROTHERS *now whisper among themselves, snickering coarsely and wagging their heads. But as* TINA *begins reading, they return to their sanctity.*)

TINA—(*Haltingly at first.*) ". . . And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud. Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap—for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

BROTHER CADERS—Hah-hah.

(*The* THREE BROTHERS *grin at him, their eyes shining in sudden ecstasy.*)

TINA—"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters on the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." (*Trembling.*) "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the wine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." (*She stops and bows her head in her lap.*)

BROTHER CADERS—Amen! (*The* THREE BROTHERS *echo him.*)

TINA—"And the winepress was trodden without the city and blood came out of the winepress even unto the horse bridle by the space of a thousand and six furlongs." (*Excitedly.*) Blood—blood.

THREE BROTHERS—Blood of the fornifiers!

BROTHER CADERS—Blood from the adulterers of Babylon. Blood from the press of God's wrath! There shall be no more music there, no sound of pleasure in her streets—blood, blood!

THREE BROTHERS—No psalter, no harp shall be heard there.

TINA—In the city of Babylon?

BROTHER CADERS—All is dead there, the grass and sand have covered Babylon. The Scriptures have been fulfilled.

TINA—(*Half to herself.*) The young and old, the laughing and the singing. They were young and happy.

BROTHER CADERS—The evil shall die.

TINA—(*Shuddering.*) A fly, a puff of wind. All must die.

BROTHER CADERS—That great city perished. (TINA *bows her head in her hands and sits and says nothing.*) Like the woman of Sodom, corruption fattened at her breast.

THREE BROTHERS—(*Again whispering among themselves.*) She is crying over her sins, blessed be the Name. (*They suddenly raise their dolorous voices in a mournful singsong.*)

The smoke of her torment
Ascendeth forever and ever.
She hath no rest day nor night,
—— Day nor night.
Her flesh shall be torn with bitterness
Her bed coals of fire doth make.
She hath no rest day nor night,
—— Day nor night.

TINA—(*Viciously.*) Sing and sing and talk and talk.

(*With impassive faces the* THREE BROTHERS *pull small testaments from their pockets and begin to read in a low indistinct mumble.* FATHER *and* MOTHER BASSEL *look about startled, then close their eyes and bow their heads humbly over their plates. The* YOUNG REVEREND *slides further down in his seat, his head sagged despondently upon his breast. He never looks up and never says anything.*

BROTHER CADERS *crosses the room and gets down on his knees beside* TINA, *peering up into her face.*)

BROTHER CADERS—Save thy sweet soul from the fires.

(TINA *quails before him and sits up straight, looking at him with a wavering skeptical smile.*)

TINA—Cold, cold. A weight holds me down. (*Helplessly.*) I don't know.

BROTHER CADERS—Pray!

(*The* THREE BROTHERS, FATHER *and* MOTHER BASSEL *all get down on their knees, but the* YOUNG REVEREND *remains hunched in his chair.*)

THREE BROTHERS—(*Gleefully intoning.*) Hear us now, Lord.

BROTHER CADERS—(*In a deep rolling voice.*) Here is a soul, Lord, on thy mercy, here is a poor heart lost in darkness. Evil hath snared her in his toils, he hath encompassed himself 'round about her. He goeth in the low places, he crieth his strength aloft in the hills. This is his last stronghold. In the dark night he howleth among the stones, he waiteth as a wolf to devour thy lambs. Destroy him, Lord, free thy daughter. He speaketh through her lips, he holdeth her heart fast. Bring him to vengeance. Out of the darkness from the bowels of the earth the adversary of old reborn. He cometh among the fair and joyful daughters, to lead astray, to tear with his sharp teeth.

THREE BROTHERS—Kill him, kill him.

TINA—Hah—hah—hah!

BROTHER CADERS—He laughs on her lips. He is the beast that trampeth thy vineyards, he breaketh through the hedges, he leapeth the fences. Let the hunter of God take him, let thy snare hold him fast.

THREE BROTHERS—(*Their voices high and fervent.*) Kill him, kill him!

BROTHER CADERS—Our voices cry from the vineyard, in the heat of the sun we pray thy vengeance. The whip of the taskmaster is over us, our flesh is weary. The adversary meeteth us at every turn. Only thy power can match him. Here is a soul, Lord, on thy mercy, here is a poor heart lost in darkness, Touch her forehead with the light of thy seal.

THREE BROTHERS—Seal, sanctify and make whole. (BROTHER CADERS *clasps his head in his hands, his great hulk stretched on the floor. The* THREE BROTHERS *rise from their seats and march over to his prone figure, singing as they go.*)

Ruler of heaven, keeper of hell,
Hail sweet Jesus Immanuel,
—— Jesus Immanuel.

(*They lay their fingers on his head.*)

FIRST BROTHER—Accept of our strength.

SECOND BROTHER—Be strong.

THIRD BROTHER—Accept of our strength and be strong.

(*They wait a moment as if pouring vitality into his body, then return to their seats, chanting softly now, as if weakened by the virtue that has gone out of them.*)

THREE BROTHERS—

Vengeance is his, he doth repay,
The lost and the saved, yea—soul—yea!
Old Satan bound with chains in hell—
Hail Sweet Jesus Immanuel!
—— Immanuel.

(*They reseat themselves on the bench and lay their heads over on the table in little moans of prayer.* YOUNG DAVIE *sticks his mop of curly hair in at the window and looks cautiously about. He fastens his small misty eyes on* BROTHER CADERS *and throws back his head in a gale of laughter.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—Har-har-har-har!

(BROTHER CADERS *rises blankly to his feet and backs away toward his seat at the table.*)

BROTHER CADERS—(*With an instinctive snap.*) Blasphemer!

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Grinning and showing his two rows of small rat-like teeth.*) Har-har-har—!

FATHER BASSEL—(*Opening his mild watery eyes in astonishment.*) Who's that?

(YOUNG DAVIE *reaches in and lifts the Bible from* TINA's *hands. He tears it apart and throws it at the feet of* BROTHER CADERS *as a*

mutter of horror runs around the table. Then he clambers agilely through the window and stands in the room, smiling boldly upon them. He is dressed in tough outdoor garments and heavy shoes torn and battered by thorns and thickets. With the toe of his boot he pushes the two halves of the Bible hoppingly along the floor and dumps them into the fireplace, laughing the while with loud malicious boyishness. BROTHER CADERS, *speechless, starts forward to rescue the Bible from the desecration of the ashes. The young man jumps before him and holds up his hand in a gesture of fearsome warning.*)

BROTHER CADERS—(*Squeaking.*) Ecch!

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Eyeing him and chanting.*)

Hung by hair and hung by wire,
Water shall be quenched by fire.
Torn by throat and caught by hand,
Woe—ah—woe upon this land.

THREE BROTHERS—(*Gabbling idiot-like and huddling around* BROTHER CADERS.) He is the devil. Horns are under his hair.

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Waving his arms about.*)

Horror over hearth and bed,
Nightmare enter sleeper's head,
Woe to man and wife and dog,
Baby shall be eat by hog,
Evil fall upon this home,
Death devour where I come.

(*He twiddles his fingers and cakewalks about the room.*)

THE PREACHERS—(*In horror.*) Lord have mercy!

BROTHER CADERS—(*Vociferously stuttering.*) Infidel! Atheist!

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Tweaking* BROTHER CADERS *by the nose and making conjuring signs over him.*)

Up and up, and down and down,
All about and all around,
Harry soul and harry body,
Night dark and weather muddy.

BROTHER CADERS—(*Screaming.*) A fiend!

(*He runs around behind the table, the* BROTHERS *with him.* FATHER *and* MOTHER BASSEL *stare dully before them.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Chuckling.*)

Hide sun and balmy breeze,
Horror, in the holly trees,
Woe to body, woe to soul,
Let the answering thunder roll.

(*A low rumble of thunder is heard, sounding as before like a deep groan underground, and once again a sort of malicious glee spreads over the young man's face, as he capers excitedly about the room. The preachers and* FATHER *and* MOTHER BASSEL *fall upon their knees with a cry.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—

Power, power, earth and air,
Power, power everywhere.

(*Slapping the* YOUNG REVEREND *on the shoulder.*)

Answer, Scripture, Jesus Christ,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

BROTHER CADERS—(*Moaning and beating his breast.*) Curse him! The fiend from the quagmires of sin.

THREE BROTHERS—Kill him! Kill him!

(*The* YOUNG REVEREND *sits with his head sagged on his breast as if oblivious to the scene about him, and* TINA *stands watching* YOUNG DAVIE *transfixed.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Merrily.*)

Blessed is the Judas tree
Whereupon all hanged shall be,
From beneath thy bloody bough.
Woe—ah—woe you answer now.

(*Capering.*)

Dark night and Incubus
I see you over us.

Move, Jesus. (*He sits in a chair by the* Young Reverend *and falls to eating as if starved. In the silence* Brother Caders *lifts his wagging head.*)

Brother Caders—(*As if chanting a charm.*)

God will protect, fear not,
He gives us power.
We have healed the sick, the blind have seen,
God can confound the devil,
God will protect.
God will save her young soul!

Young Davie—(*Mocking him.*)

Har—har—fear me not.
I live in graveyards, I eat dead children,
I brew witch's soup every new moon;
Rawhead was my father, Bloody Bones my mother.

Tina—Hide away. They're coming with the law.

Young Davie—(*Moving out of his chair, his hands clutched full of food.*)

I am the devil,
Born with a tail.
I wear it in my britches,
Feel it, Brother.

(*He turns himself indecently up to* Brother Caders.)

The Preachers—(*Chanting furiously.*)

Bless the Lord,
Bless the Lord,
He delivereth to salvation!

Young Davie—(*In the same tone, mocking them.*) Curse the Lord, curse the Lord, He delivereth from salvation!

Brother Caders—(*Licking his lips.*) Blasphemy! Blasphemy!

(*The* Three Brothers *clasp hands and mumble and wag their heads excitedly.*)

First Brother—(*As if protecting himself by speech.*) The farmer cursed God for destroying his crops. His horse broke in upon him at night and ate his head off.

Second Brother—(*Likewise.*) The woman said I will murder, I will destroy. The cats marched about her bed at night and drove her mad.

Third Brother—And the corpse spoke in the coffin and said, "My son has destroyed me."

The Preachers—(*In a loud cry.*) Amen! Amen! God is all powerful!

Father and Mother Bassel—(*Wringing their hands.*) Who is he? Who is he? Fire will destroy us. Our home will be laid low. Drive him away.

Young Davie—(*With mockingly tragic gestures, as he hops about.*) God sits in the blood-red clouds. (Brother Caders *throws up his hands and sits down on the floor with his head bowed in his lap. The* Three Brothers *do likewise.*) Cry aloud, Jesus. (*The* Young Reverend *makes no reply, and the young man imitates his gentle voice.*)

Up and up and round and round,
By-ways and highways and through hedges,
Rich and poor, the slave and master,
Boy and girl and man and woman.
These are they in tribulation,
They wash their robes in sin and sorrow,
In the wind and rain and storm,
Always the lost a-crying.
Hail, Jesus Christ!

(*In his own voice, singing.*)

Over the hollow, under the hill,
Across the river through the fields,
Singing and laughter, laughter and singing,
Joy of the earth, earth be joyful.
Laugh and be merry, saith I the Lord,
Hail Moloch, Hail Baal.

(*He capers about* TINA *and tries to caress her, but she, turning helplessly around, runs and stands timidly by the* YOUNG REVEREND. *He raises his hungry eyes to her for an instant and then drops his head again upon his breast.*)

BROTHER CADERS—(*Rocking his head.*) Mockery! Mockery! The wages of sin is death.

THREE BROTHERS—Amen! That's right. Amen!

YOUNG REVEREND—(*In a low voice to himself.*) If a man die shall he live again? Light! Light!

THE PREACHERS and FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL—(*In a high, foolish, and fervent pleading.*) The Light, the Light! Who will justify man to the grave? Save us!

BROTHER CADERS—Amen!

YOUNG DAVIE—Who will justify the grave to man? Hallejuh.

(*He gives the* PREACHERS *a loud whack on the shoulders and they seem to shrivel up under the blow. Then he dances across to the fireplace, gets soot on his fingers and marks his face—an upward smudge over each eyebrow, across his cheeks and chin, giving his face an intensified faunish and saturnine expression.*)

Ring the bell, Oh yus, oh yus!
Bring in the prisoner.

TINA—(*With a shriek.*) Take him away!

YOUNG DAVIE—Hee-hee—sweet love!

TINA—(*Twisting her hands and singing.*) All are dead, the young and the old, all are dead, they wept and mourned and all are dead in that great city.

YOUNG DAVIE—Hallejuh, hear the prisoner sing! (*He runs cackling about the room, touching each one singly and peering into his eyes.*)

You and you and you and me,
We are the living, where are the dead?
Here is the dead——

(*He slaps the* YOUNG REVEREND'S *shoulder again.*)

Sad, sad, he's sad!
Come out of your hiding, Death.
Where are you, old Hoary-head?

(*Jubilantly.*)

He makes no answer,
Silence, silence.

(*Shouting.*)

Salvation! Salvation!

(*Tripping over, he falls on his knees by* Tina *who is sitting stiffly in her chair.*)

Let the light shine.
The young fool is on his knees,
The old fool grinds his teeth,
The young fool is the wise man,
The light! The light!

(*He kisses her on the lips and she looks stiffly back at him. Presently a smile begins to break over her face. He looks at her gleefully, his eyes twinkling. Moving away from her, he calls wistfully.*)

Follow me early, follow me soon,

(Harvey *appears at the window with his gun drawn.*)

In the hills, under the moon.

Harvey—(*Foolishly pompous.*) The power of the law!

Young Davie—(*Cackling and shrugging his shoulders.*)

I am the resurrection and the life.
Except ye believe ye shall likewise perish.

Harvey—(*Coming through the window.*) Be easy and quiet. Everybody be easy and quiet and don't be afraid. (*As he enters the others spring up as if freed from a spell. In the medley of excited grabbings they all, except* Tina *and the* Young Reverend, *stretch accusing hands at the young man.*

Brother Caders—Take him and bind him in irons. Put him in the dungeon. He was foretold of old.

Tina—(*Springing up.*) Who is that with the gun?

Young Reverend—Let him suffer. (*He rises and goes quietly out at the right.*)

Young Davie—

Farewell, Jesus,
Har—har—har——

I will have a word with him.
And he will save us.

(*He starts out at the right, but an armed man appears in the door. He turns and runs to the door at the left. Another armed man appears.*)

TINA—(*Flinging herself against* HARVEY.) Don't touch him! Let him go!

HARVEY—No, and I reckon we'll take him!

(YOUNG DAVIE, *as if suddenly terrified, runs wildly about the room, flings himself against the walls, climbing up to the ceiling, clings a moment, like a bat, and then falls back, crouching in the middle of the room, his hands raised before his face like the claws of an animal waiting an attack.*)

TINA—(*Shrieking.*) I'm afraid of him! (FATHER *and* MOTHER BASSEL *murmur over her and soothe her.*)

HARVEY—Take hold of him. He can't put tricks on a gun.

(*The two armed men come cautiously up and stand near him.* HARVEY *pulls out his handcuffs.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Relaxing his body and sticking out his hands.*) Hee-hee-hee! (*Winking at them.*) But the jail won't hold him, the iron can't hold him. (*Peering up at* HARVEY.) I'll come through the keyhole.

HARVEY—(*Panting and snapping on the handcuffs.*) Painted up—hah? But ye couldn't fool me. (*Angrily.*) Don't try to pull spells on me. (*Raising his voice.*) I'm ignorant, got no sense, I can't quote scripture, I don't read books. Others are smart with talk. Don't do no good, not a bit of good. I can't understand you. (*As if infuriated.*) But I know my business, I know what I'm doing. Move on now to the jailhouse.

BROTHER CADERS—Blessed be the name of the Lord!

THREE BROTHERS—Blessed be the Name. (*Raising their cracked and doleful voices in song.*)

Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

HARVEY—It's my net. I set it. (*Furiously.*) She talked too slick. She knew more'n she ort. I knew where to find him. I orter looked here sooner. Move on.

TINA—(*With a low moan.*) Don't let 'em shut him up.

YOUNG DAVIE—Hee—hee!

HARVEY—Ah-hah—Listen.

(*The two armed men take hold of* YOUNG DAVIE and start to lead *him out. But he breaks away from them and begins dancing grotesquely and singing in the middle of the room, clanking his handcuffs like castanets.*)

YOUNG DAVIE—

My name is Young Davie, and listen ye well,
I first lived in heaven, next lived in hell.
Tra-la-la-la, in hell.
Now among rocks in the woods and in rain,
Don't worry, good people, I'll be back again,
Tra-la-la-la, again.

HARVEY—(*Seizing him by the collar.*) Walk behind. Shoot if he runs. He's crazy and he's mean.

YOUNG DAVIE—

My roof is the sky and my fire is the sun——

TINA—(*Plaintively.*) He is a murderer!

YOUNG DAVIE—

Don't worry, good people, all trouble is fun,
Har-har-har-har-har-har,
Tra-la-la-la-la, is fun.

BROTHER CADERS—Let blasphemy and its wretch go to their punishment!

THREE BROTHERS—(*Giggling gleefully.*) Hallelujah!

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Singing as he is led out.*)

My pa was a goblin, my mother a shrew,
They christened me Satan in witch's brew,
Tra-la-la-la-la witch's brew.
Now I'm out when I'm in, and I'm in when I'm out,

And nobody knows what I am about,
Har—har—har—har—har—har—
Tra-la-la-la-la——
I'll come to the meeting and be saved!

BROTHER CADERS—(*Rising and lifting his hands in benediction.*) May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us——

TINA—(*Bursting into sobs.*) Go away, everybody, go away and leave me!

INTERLUDE

Now all is seen as on a screen in pantomime. TINA flits from the room and going out at the left throws herself down on the bed in silent grief. FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL sit with their arms around each other in fear and anguish of heart. The THREE BROTHERS and BROTHER CADERS raise a song, timidly at first—still afraid and wondering—and then gathering volume until they swell into a chorus triumphant over the confusion of evil, the justification of the good God. Now they wag and leer and jostle their arms mightily about, but the parents remain bowed in their chair. When they have raised their spirits and sung themselves out, the preachers move again to the table and finish their supper. And soon FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL follow.

Out at the barn the stock are seen eating their corn and fodder. Old Nick, the gaunt horse that has drawn the fat preachers to many a meeting, has finished his supper and is tearing strips out of the trough and devouring them. A bony grotesque creature he is with an unearthly look in his eye, a look like that of the shrewish OLD WOMAN. Before many more revivals come and go he will have starved to death, for there's not much sustenance for a horse's belly in wood. And the wheeling buzzards will turn and swoop upon his carcass to no avail. His back is raw from the working of the iron through the harness. FATHER BASSEL in pity, and begging God's blessing, has put axlegrease on the sores and that has helped some.

In the fields and by the hedges walks the ungainly figure of the YOUNG REVEREND communing with himself. TINA stands behind

the curtained window in her room looking out at him, and when she can see him no more she lies down again, her mind gazing full into an impish laughing face. Round and about and back and forth the YOUNG REVEREND stalks in the dusk with his head bent on his breast. Who will comfort him? Who will give him rest? Who will give answer to that which gnaws within him? At the edge of the woods he turns and with an odd gesture towards the darkening sky makes his way again to the house. The preachers have finished their supper now and are standing grouped in the middle of the room reading in unison from their Testaments. Out of their soundless lips pour the holy words. FATHER BASSEL goes out and harnesses old Nick to the rickety surrey, placing a comforting pad beneath the torturing backband for God's grace has not yet healed. The THREE BROTHERS put on their little derby hats and button their coats up tight around their throats, looking like a vaudeville trio. BROTHER CADERS, the stage villain, pulls on his great plug hat, shakes his huge shoulders and hairy face and strides ahead towards the waiting surrey, his three henchmen coming behind. They climb in and drive off. FATHER BASSEL hitches his own roan to the buggy, one of the family loved and tended and fat as a butter-ball. He calls to MOTHER BASSEL, and she comes out of the house dressed in her mourning. Won't she come tonight? he says. She lies on the bed, she won't say nothing. But as they are ready to drive away, TINA runs out of the house with a shawl thrown over her shoulders. I'm going, she says, I'm going to the church. The parents murmur hopefully and look at each other. Then the three, TINA sitting on her mother's lap, drive away down the road.

On the narrow winding country roads, others are approaching the little white church sitting in the grove of oak trees a mile away —farmers and their wives, young and old, here and there sweethearts, snuggling close in their buggies going to the house of God. In their cottages here and yonder some sit by the fire. We see them as if the roof were off the house and the walls had disappeared—a mother poulticing her sick baby, an old man putting his feet in the ashes and complaining of the cold coming on, young folks sitting in the parlor and planning for the future. Religion can wait till another day, they mean to say.

Down in the bogs of Swampy River one-eyed Lon Travis tends his still and keeps his ears open. He hears the flying-squirrels cutting in the trees overhead and the rabbits thumping about. Presently the woods is filled with the tiny tapping and scratching of rain falling through the autumn leaves. It's a good night, he says to himself, everything's safe. He hopes that on such a night he might see YOUNG DAVIE prowling about. The first night here he thought he saw boogers coming with lights, their starry eyes shining, and green beards down to their waists. He's never seen them though, nor YOUNG DAVIE, nor any other strange creatures of the woods. Lon is a sensible man. He doesn't know it, and wouldn't believe it if he did, but the fine rain falling over the land and feeding the thirsty trees and parching crops is God's answer to the prayer of the preachers. One-eyed Lon folds his coat under his head, feels his money safe in his pocket, and lies down under the leaning trees to sleep. Curiosity is never too sharp with him, and he will live to be old.

Coming up the little hill from the creek, old Nick, the horse, finding his load too heavy, staggers in weariness and falls to the ground. He turns his head and stares accusingly at his tormentors. He flaps his huge whiskered lips back over his yellow teeth, crying have mercy. But only the YOUNG REVEREND hears and he can do nothing for him. The preachers urge him on with the whip, and in vain he shakes his scraggy head to answer them. They clamber out and stand around him singing and exhorting him. The YOUNG REVEREND comes and rubs his head in pity, reading the great condemnation in his frightful eye. The other preachers get down by the roadside and pray to the Almighty to strengthen old Nick to draw his load. And *mirabile dictu,* the old horse soon staggers to his feet, rattles his harness and moves on. The four preachers get into the surrey again, praising God, and jubilant in their own might. The YOUNG REVEREND walks sadly behind as they go over the hill and turn off to the church in the grove.

The congregation arrive, tying mules and horses to swinging limbs and hiding their buggy whips under the blankets from prankish boys proguing around. There is handshaking and howdy-doing with quiet and sober joy. Hearts are thankful, God answers

prayers. The gnarled and knotted old fellows, in home-made shirts and trousers, the bent and wizened old women under their black bonnets, mothers and fathers—all are there. Hope has freshened in their hearts. Their faces shine, the day of miracles is not past. God is a present God. He keeps us in his hands. Evil is being confounded, the plague of sin is wiped out, and rain has come. Old Turner is there walking straight again. His leg was healed a-Monday. Old Miss Allie Reardon's broken rib is well again with the laying on of hands. Others have been made whole, their countenances testify to it. Brother Caders and the brethren move around shaking hands and blessing those before them, and telling and retelling the news of the capture in answer to their prayer. Ever and anon they gesture toward the amenable heavens. The Young Reverend mutely goes along. He never says anything, he never shakes hands, but all feel better and calmer before him. This is a kind man and knows more than his heart can tell.

Harvey and the two armed men are seen hurrying the merry young man along the road, Harvey walking by his side with his fingers in the ring of the handcuffs, and the armed men behind. Young Davie or whoever he is goes singing, clogging, and jeering at his captors. As he goes he raises his hands and calls their attention to the homeless Pleiades rising in the east. They march on, muffled in the gloom of the deserted country hedge and fence. Fire damps begin to shine in the grass and boggy places. He boos at his captors and tries to frighten them with the horrors of the Will-o-the-Wisp. Their faces are cold and set in the power of the law, impassive, they march straight on. Goblins are everywhere, he can raise them if he will. Look, what is that behind the stump with a knife in its teeth. It's the head of the old spy was hung before the Surrender. It moves along like a ball of fog over the ground. They now approach the little village and county-seat where lights are twinkling in the dusk. Up the street they go towards the jail-house. The news spreads that Young Davie is taken, and the inhabitants pour out of their houses, leaving their suppers to grow cold. Young girls lean over the bannisters and look at him as he passes, whispering and clasping tell-tale hands. What a pretty young man, oh such a shame, they sigh. Boys follow behind hooting, yelling and

calling to their fellows. Old men and middle-aged men turn about, spit, eye one another, and foretell the hanging and when it will be. Old Raymond was a good man. And yes, remember, God is the very God! The captors march on the length of the street and YOUNG DAVIE waves his manacled hands and sings his songs loudly and joyfully in the air. The jail door opens and swallows him up. HARVEY bids them all good night, and without stopping to tell the story of the capture, strides back along the darkening country road to his little house glistening by the edge of a big field. He goes in, builds a fire and sits down before the hearth, staring before him with gloomy face, for it is lonesome there.

In the little village the excitement dies down. The shopkeeper and the shoemaker return to their homes, and the young girls sigh no more. YOUNG DAVIE is seen sitting in his cell. The gaoler has returned to his fireside and family. Friends come in to hear the story of the outlaw. The gaoler recounts it, taking glory unto himself. He is a wild man and tried to bite me, he says. He has teeth like a dog. In a moment he will lead them upstairs to see the mad critter out of the woods. YOUNG DAVIE opens a barred window, slides down the wall and disappears into the darkness.

ACT II

The country church is a small building with two wide windows, a door at the front and a tiny steeple above. Rickety steps lead up to the door. The interior is smokily lighted by a lamp sitting on the pulpit and one hanging from a wire in the center of the ceiling. Through the windows the assembled congregation can be seen, with the preachers on the rostrum. BROTHER CADERS is standing by the pulpit reading the scripture lesson. The THREE BROTHERS are sitting on a bench behind him looking out over the audience now with bland sleek faces. The YOUNG REVEREND is far to one side with his head bent on his breast. The rain is coming down, rolling off the roof in a steady murmur. To the right of the pulpit a group of old women sit huddled, bowed under their bonnets and looking out with bright expectant eyes. To the left of the pulpit and facing

the old women are a group of old men, deacons and elders of the church, weatherbeaten and gnarled, shrivelled and bearded, some morose and surly, some timid and gentle. Before the pulpit is a long bench which is used for the mercy seat. The floor around is knee-deep in hay for the mourners to roll and wallow on. A wide aisle leads from the front door to the pulpit, dividing the congregation in two—to the right mainly the middle-aged women and men, fathers and mothers, to the left the young men and young girls. The closed door of the church and the constant drip of the rain outside obsucre the sound of the meeting within. Only now and then are the organ and singing heard or the loud intermittent shouts of Brother Caders. That great preacher is seen closing his Bible as he lifts his hands in prayer over the flock. Father and Mother Bassel come up outside with Tina and stand waiting before the door. Tina holds her hands crossed on her breast, her eyes downcast. Inside the church the old women have got down on their knees and laid their faces flat on the bench. The old men across from them have done likewise. Some of the middle-aged at the right of the wide aisle fall on their knees and some do not, bowing their heads or bodies partly over as if not yet quite ready to humble themselves before their Maker. Only one or two of the young people to the left of the aisle bow abjectly down. They sit with their heads stiffly inclined a bit and their eyes closed. Old Mrs. Adams's idiot Jim leaves his seat and goes to his mother in the old woman's corner and gets down on the floor with her, clinging to her, for he is always afraid of these strange things. The Young Reverend sits with his head inclined like the young people. Brother Caders' heavy voice comes through the door in a low indistinct mumble. He says amen and the people rise and resume their seats. He begins a song. A girl goes to the wheezy organ and plays. An angular middle-aged fellow stands by her leading the music. He waves his song-book and sweeps the air with an arm long as a rail beating time. Father and Mother Bassel go slowly up the steps and into the church, Tina following behind. As the door is opened the music comes out in a moan and dies away again when it is closed. They make their way down the aisle under the staring eyes of their solicitous neighbors. Father Bassel takes his seat among the old men

and MOTHER BASSEL among the old women. TINA stands confused a moment, and BROTHER CADERS steps swiftly down from the pulpit and leads her to a seat by the old women. He bends over her and whispers in her ear and stretches his arm over the audience. The THREE BROTHERS descend from the rostrum and crouch down at Tina's feet, rubbing their hands, their faces lifted up, their lips moving in harmonious prayer. The YOUNG REVEREND catches TINA's imploring look, shifts himself in his chair and gazes before him unseeingly. The music stops and BROTHER CADERS calls for the testimony of the saved. An old man and an old woman rise up on their opposite sides like jacks-in-the-box, ready to testify to their blessings. The old man sits down and the woman tells her story. Her hands beat the air. Her eyes flash. Her bonnet is pushed back, revealing her grey hair and cadaverous neck. God has been good to me, she says. He has upheld me these seventy years. I love him and bless him all the days of my life. Pointing to TINA, she bursts out weeping and sits down, rocking her frail body about. The old man is on his feet. I want to thank God for all he's done for me. God's good. God is the only God. God will save her. He makes a sudden awkward gesture towards TINA and sits down. An incredibly ancient woman, shrivelled and battered, climbs to her feet and leans on her stick. I want to thank God for what he's done for me, she quavers. She pulls off her bonnet and puts her finger on a wart-like sore protruding beneath her eye. She touches TINA on the shoulder and asks her to look, but TINA cowers in her seat. Praise the Lord, my sore is healed. The prayers of my people and of my Lord, bless his Name. The YOUNG REVEREND turns and looks at her with a muffled pitying countenance. A young girl at the left, blue-eyed and with a doll-like face, sweet as a child's stands up and stretches her arms towards TINA. Then she babbles in the air around her. I am so thankful that the Lord has saved my friend. She glances sweetly down at a young farmer, touches him softly on the shoulder and re-seats herself in shy confusion beside him. Amen, says BROTHER CADERS. Amen, say the THREE BROTHERS, clapping their hands in unison. The old women begin to sway in their corner and the old men answer them with bows and weaving of heads in theirs. The old man on the end of the bench stands up. Bless God for all his

mercy, he slobbers, his chin doddering in weakness. He points to his crippled leg, steps out on a crutch, points to BROTHER CADERS and to God, touches TINA's bowed head and gestures to his gathered friends. I'm healed. I'm cured. He drops his crutch, moves towards the mercy seat, starts to cut a step in a country dance, remembers himself, and flings up his arms in ecstatic wonder. A mighty amen and thank the Lord burst in the gestures of the congregation.

Before the church outside comes the witch man and his haggish wife of the evil eye. The OLD MAN points to the church door and cackles. The OLD WOMAN nods and they mount the steps and enter the church. The OLD MAN comes down the aisle and thumps on into a seat near the front where his hag sits with him. The congregation are horrified, the three preachers cease their clapping. TINA looks up and sees them, and shuddering, hides her face in her hands. Then BROTHER CADERS cries unto the congregation to witness that God has driven these to his tabernacle. Yea, evil is undone, he points. And the people nod and bend. Yea, it is true. But still they eye the couple uneasily. FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL stand up simultaneously. MOTHER BASSEL struggles for words and then, pointing sharply at her daughter, drops jerkily back on her bench. FATHER BASSEL nods sadly and resumes his seat. BROTHER CADERS points to her likewise and calls upon all to take note of this lost girl. He strides before her, points to the mercy seat and orders her to go and bow herself. She stares back at him with dull unseeing eyes. FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL come now leading their neighbors, the old men and old women, over to TINA. They get down around her, pluck at her dress, beseech her, pray and weep over her. The gesture of their lamentation fills the air. Twice she raises her head and stares pleadingly at the YOUNG REVEREND. But he will not or cannot help her and presently she stands up and walks stiffly forward to the bed of hay. There she stands erect and cold as a post with the clamorous gang about her. The OLD MAN rises from his seat and stands beside her. A great burst of triumphant prayer and blessings pour from the people's mute and fluttering lips. MOTHER BASSEL falls weeping on TINA's breast, and FATHER BASSEL crouches down by her holding one of her cold hands in his and covering it

with kisses. The YOUNG REVEREND rises as if to go to her aid, and then as if not daring, turns his back upon them.

At the front of the church outside YOUNG DAVIE comes up from the darkness and stands peering in at the window. Giggling and prancing, he mounts the steps and goes into the church, standing just inside the door and watching the scene with a smile crinkling about his eyes. Suddenly TINA throws up her hands with a shriek and falls senseless on the hay. The YOUNG REVEREND uncovers his face and stares across the audience at YOUNG DAVIE's smiling countenance. Then he comes down from the rostrum, moves slowly along the aisle by him and out of the church. The eyes of the middle-aged on the right and of the young on the left follow him. They catch sight of the merry fellow and eye him in perplexity, nudging and whispering uneasily to one aonther. A middle-aged man at the right who has been one of the armed men at FATHER BASSEL'S house, stands up and points at YOUNG DAVIE. Lord God Almighty, the outlaw is in the church! The mothers turn away shuddering and clasping their husbands protectingly to them. The fathers stand up threateningly. The young girls on the left crane their necks forward and whisper among themselves, some daring to look at him with bold admiring eyes. Several of the young men likewise smile at him quite friendly, others stand up angry and threatening like the middle-aged men on the right. YOUNG DAVIE puts out his arm in a gesture of peace. Bowing his head meekly, he advances down the aisle towards the mourners' bench. The two groups of men sit down and watch him warily. He stands behind BROTHER CADERS who is bent over TINA. He calls to the people to see that the girl is dead. BROTHER CADERS whirling, springs to his feet, jumps back and looks fearfully at him. YOUNG DAVIE smiles at him kindly. BROTHER CADERS turns to the congregation and begs all to pray that God will protect them from the Evil One, and with averted face he points to the smiling saturnine youth. There is a muttering and growling and clenching of fists among the middle-aged men at the right. Some stand up again, others bow to their knees. A few belligerent arms are raised among the young men at the left, but the young girls reaching out unclasp the fists of their sweethearts, and the young men lower their hands in sheepish anger at first, and

then gradually warm into smiles under their sweethearts' hidden caresses. The old men and old women go on with their prayers and labors over TINA. YOUNG DAVIE catches BROTHER CADERS by the nose and turns him round facing him. He calls with one hand to the people and points to the preacher with the other, and then gestures downward where TINA lies. Again, the girl is dead, the preachers have killed her. This sweet flower is dead. The law will call for blood—blood. The middle-aged mothers and fathers to the right lift up their faces in horror and pity. The young men and young women at the left spring to their feet. They stretch out mocking and threatening hands at the preachers. BROTHER CADERS and the THREE BROTHERS shrink away towards the pulpit. YOUNG DAVIE throws back his head in his gale of soundless laughter. The OLD MAN looks up and cackles likewise, and his OLD WOMAN covers her face with her hands and rocks with broken giggles. YOUNG DAVIE, the witch man and the hag, stretch their faces wider and wider in unholy glee. Suddenly they stop and stand with meek bowed heads, as if ashamed. BROTHER CADERS lays his hand on the open Bible and as if emboldened by the touch of it, begins to preach. He flings his fist upward and pounds upon the lectern. He points at YOUNG DAVIE. He calls upon God to crush him. Destroy the Antichrist and save the young man's soul, if he has a soul, and the soul of this girl. The middle-aged and the old sway and moan and gesture with the preacher. The young at the left sit with their heads bowed in the same attitude as YOUNG DAVIE. The mocking smile that plays about his lips is duplicated on theirs. In the midst of the preacher's tirade, YOUNG DAVIE turns and fixes him with his eyes. He advances slowly towards the pulpit, making mystic and outlandish signs with his hands as he goes. The old hermit chortles in low gleefulness. BROTHER CADERS retreats before him as he mounts the rostrum. He comes nearer to the four preachers and the four as if suddenly dejected huddle down into the small apse. YOUNG DAVIE lifts his hands and brings them low down to the floor again and again. The four preachers slowly sink to their knees, laying their faces flat on the seats of the bench, their rumps turned towards the audience. YOUNG DAVIE points at them and the young people titter and giggle indecently. The old women and the old men turn their backs upon him

and bow their heads forlornly in an attitude resembling that of the YOUNG REVEREND. The middle-aged men and women get down upon their knees at their benches like BROTHER CADERS. The young at the left sit watching, stiffly erect, with sparkling eyes. As the old and middle-aged moan and pray, the young man throws the Bible on the floor. Stretching out his arms he calls to them. What fools we are, following the blind. Look what they do, she is dead. Who will listen to them. They are mad and full of dreams. The old and the middle-aged shake their heads. No, no, they say. The young nod, yes that is true. The old hermit nods, yes, yes, and the hag agrees. They are fools and madmen. They preach the false God. They preach death. Life they do not know. They have no power, their arms are weak. Look, he says pointing, she is dead. Turning, he kicks BROTHER CADERS. Rise, bring back to life. The old and the middle-aged shake their heads in denial, the old gently and the middle-aged vehemently. BROTHER CADERS, with a faint sobbing bull-like bellow, picks the Bible from the floor and springs to his feet. As if obeying YOUNG DAVIE'S commands, like a sleep-walker, he bends over TINA, clasping the Bible to his breast. He beats upon it and cries out in a loud voice, Arise, be whole again. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, come forth from the dead. The old turn towards him, stretching out their hands in supplication. The middle-aged do likewise and the young stand watching in excitement. In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, he prays again. FATHER and MOTHER BASSEL plead and cry. But no movement answers in TINA'S lifeless form. YOUNG DAVIE laughs har-har-har, and the hermit and his hag echo him. The THREE BROTHERS mechanically rise and cry with wide stretching lips for TINA to come from death. But there is no answer. YOUNG DAVIE laughs his mocking har-har-har, and the grotesque pair answer him. BROTHER CADERS begins beating on his Bible like a drum, his face set in a dull baffled grieving, and the THREE BROTHERS pull out their small Testaments and do likewise. Down the aisle they go, marching in step and chanting in time—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—Father—— The young folks laugh jeeringly at them as they go out

of the church—Brother Caders and the Three Brothers stiffly descending the steps.

Brother Caders and the Three Brothers—(*Still chanting.*) Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

They come to themselves and see the shadowy figure of the Young Reverend walking under the dripping trees. They hurry to him and plead with him in a droning mumble to help them, to save this people, but the figure moves on and disappears into the darkness. They follow him, the hum of their voices growing fainter and fainter until they are heard no more.

Inside the church the old and the middle-aged now fling their arms around their heads in hopelessness. Young Davie cackles with laughter, and a tittering grin ripples back and forth among the youths and girls. He steps down from the rostrum and stands over Tina. He holds his hands above her, and as if in answer to his call, she rises to her feet. Joyous and silent laughter pours from the throats of the young. They catch hands and swing backwards and forwards, throw their arms around one another and spring to their feet, clinging together. Father and Mother Bassel take Tina in their arms with happy cries, but she pushes them aside and holds fast to Young Davie. He looks down at her, puckering his lips and smiling. The old and the middle-aged sit up with a gasp of amazement. Father Bassel resumes his seat among the old men and Mother Bassel among the old women. Their faces are shining. The young people now begin to smile and laugh with Young Davie. The middle-aged and old remain silent, stiffly erect, waiting. Young Davie gestures towards the girl at the organ and she begins to play a loose dancing tune. The angular man stands up beating time, now and then giving a rhythmic jerk with his body and feet. Young Davie calls upon the youths and maidens to come and be saved. They troop forward laughing, nodding their heads, embracing one another. He and Tina move about among the audience, the others following. Now they talk to the old and the middle-aged, plead with them over their misdeeds of righteousness. Evil has become the good. The righteous and the sanctified have become the evil and lost. Laugh and be joyful, the young say to the old. They plead with them to renounce the ways of sorrow. The old hermit and

his wife follow behind YOUNG DAVIE and TINA, laughing all the while, their faces crafty and malicious, but all the while full of laughter. As the youths and girls plead, the middle-aged and the old shake their heads. No, no, they say, and their sons and daughters answer, yes, yes. YOUNG DAVIE takes a handful of ferns and leaves from a vase on the altar and ties a garland around his head and around TINA's. He waves to the girl at the organ and cuts steps back and forth across the floor. The girl pedals more furiously. YOUNG DAVIE and TINA begin dancing. They whirl about up and down, the other couples following them. The old women draw in their skirts and cover their faces. The old men bow down and groan. And the fathers and mothers hide their heads in their laps. The youths and girls begin to gambol and dance. They march up and down before the altar singing, nodding their heads, laughing. The young girls throw off their hats, undo their hair—they open the bosoms of their dresses and beautify themselves. The young men pursue them round and round, catch them and caress them.

Outside BROTHER CADERS comes dragging the YOUNG REVEREND from the darkness. The THREE BROTHERS are behind with their Testaments. They go into the church, and YOUNG DAVIE laughs defiantly at them—har-har-har, hee-hee-hee. With TINA, he puts himself at the head of the rout and starts down the aisle. The YOUNG REVEREND stretches out his helpless hands towards them in despair. As if for comfort, he goes over to the old women and the old men who gather around him, both for protection and protectingly. BROTHER CADERS runs among the middle-aged inciting them to prevent the crew escaping from the church. The fathers and mothers fall upon the young men and girls and try to drive them back into their seats. Two men fall upon YOUNG DAVIE and grapple with him. But he and his followers break through the door, out of the church and down the steps. They gambol about in the grove, laughing and whooping drunkenly.

CROWD—Whoo-ee——whoo-ah!

Following after them come the witch man and his wife. Muttering and looking behind them, they disappear in the darkness at the right. With wailing and lamentation, the middle-aged, led by BROTHER CADERS and the THREE BROTHERS, come out and down the

steps. They fall upon their knees in a group, crying for their sons and daughters. The old come tottering out, following the YOUNG REVEREND. They crouch down on the ground mouthing and groaning out low fearful prayers. A moment later the YOUNG REVEREND, drawing his coat about him, turns and goes away through the darkness after the OLD MAN and the OLD WOMAN.

BROTHER CADERS—(*Wringing his hands.*) The Evil One has come among us!

OLD WOMEN—(*Beating their heads against the earth.*) Have mercy, Lord, have mercy!

OLD MEN—Sin hath found us out!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN—My son, my son!

MIDDLE-AGED MEN—My daughter, my daughter!

(YOUNG DAVIE *and his troops now come up around them from the darkness. They begin circling them like a rout of serenaders, singing and mocking them.*)

THE TROOP—

In the green woods, under cool shade,
There will the wedding-bed be made—
Har-har!

While the dead sleep in the ground,
Tra-la-la we dance around—
Har-har!

MOTHER BASSEL—(*Crying out.*) Tina, Tina!

TINA—(*Her face is shining, trips through the circle and mocks at her. Singing in a high voice.*) Sing and dance and play and run.

YOUNG DAVIE—(*Snatching her into his arms.*) Hee-hee-hee—sweet honey one. Har-har.

(*Holding hands, he and* TINA *run swiftly away through the darkness in the direction taken by the witch man, the hag and the* YOUNG REVEREND. The *young men and women dance on around the circle, then missing the two they go wandering drunkenly around in the darkness calling after them with shouts and fluttering cries.*)

YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN—Come back, come back!

BROTHER CADERS—(*In a loud voice.*) Let every knee bow and every tongue confess! Woe upon all the transgressors, saith the

Lord. (*He and the* THREE BROTHERS *go about the grove driving them in. One by one the young men and women come back and bow upon their knees. In shame the young women do up their hair and close the bosoms of their dresses.* BROTHER CADERS *berates them.*) What madness has come upon ye? Shall God visit his horror upon ye? Shall the everlasting fire consume ye? Cry mercy unto God. Yea!

THE THREE BROTHERS—Yea, thou lost and undone!

YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN—Satan's power brought over us. Mercy, mercy!

BROTHER CADERS—Amen.

THE THREE BROTHERS—Amen.

BROTHER CADERS—The evil ones shall die. Save her young soul from them.

THE THREE BROTHERS—Kill him! Kill him!

OLD MEN AND WOMEN—Kill him! And save her soul!

MIDDLE-AGED MEN and WOMEN—Kill him!

YOUNG AND OLD—(*In a great chorus.*) Kill him and save her!

(YOUNG DAVIE's *mocking laugh and* TINA's *high cry come back to them from the darkness. The middle-aged and the young spring to their feet and shake their fists after him with booing and cursing. The old still crouch upon the ground.*)

BROTHER CADERS—Call upon the law. Bind him in chains.

(*They scatter to their vehicles under the trees, and a few young men and girls impulsively turn and go running away after* YOUNG DAVIE *and* TINA. *In vain their parents call after them.*)

INTERLUDE

Now in an interlude and as figures on a screen the neighbors drive wildly along the road under the dim and cloudy moon. BROTHER CADERS and the THREE BROTHERS urge old Nick as fast as he can travel, back to FATHER BASSEL's house. Oomp-oomp-oomp, he says to himself. What do they mean? Have they no heart, no mercy in them? What are these creatures called men? In the woods the young men go wandering about. Lost and hallooing, they fear the

witches in the dark forest. Two men go by and stir the morose and sleepless HARVEY out of bed. They meet others coming from town who have discovered the flight from jail. The countryside is aroused, and men carrying rifles, guns, pistols and clubs begin gathering at the cross-roads store. Now that the little church is deserted, YOUNG DAVIE and TINA come out of the woods. They go inside, smash the lamps which have been left burning and set fire to the building. Skipping about like children, they watch the flames awhile and then run back into the woods. The men at the cross-roads see the light, and in an angry band tear across fields and stream to get there. Splashing through mud and water they come paying no mind to the evil light of the Will-of-the-Wisp that beckons pitifully for their souls. But before they arrive the church is burned to ashes. The farmers stand around the ruins in moody silence. They sit about on logs and stumps at the edge of the forest and wait for dawn. Let the good fire burn now. Spell and the evil eye are afraid of fire. Out of their nodding, they start up again and again and look anxiously about them. What is this crawling under my clothes? I felt a finger on my shoulder, a breath upon my lips. And now and then one more afraid than the rest sends an answering halloo to his fellows lost in the deep bogs and thickets. O God the Father, send the red dawn!

ACT III

Scene: It is near dawn and beyond the cliff the morning star can be seen riding above the valley. The smouldering ruins of the little church cast up a faint glow from the darkness below. From beneath the door of the little house at the left gleams a thread of light. TINA's broken caressing voice is heard singing within, accompanied as it were by a faint drumming music.

TINA—*(Her words at last coming out clear.)* And up in heaven that bright star, shining for us!

YOUNG DAVIE— Hee-hee-hee.

TINA—*(Humbly.)* We worship thee, O holy light!

YOUNG DAVIE—*(With a loud laugh.)* Hah-har-har!

(He bounds gaily out of the house and sits down on the altar, making a noise like a Jew's-harp with his lips and pat-a-caking

with his hands. TINA *comes out after him and falls on her knees before him and the altar and presently lays her head with its disordered hair gently in his lap.)*

TINA—*(Softly.)* A light that comes from God—from that great world beyond—bringing his love to his children. *(She weeps with happiness.)*

DAVIE—And a ha-ha-ha.

TINA—His love and my love for you. *(Adoringly.)* Come, let me lie in your arms. Feel your sweet breath against my face. *(Singing.)* Honey-dew shines on the hedge, the hickory buds are sweet in spring, but my love is sweeter than they. Are you afraid of me? Why stay so far away? I'm not afraid of you. I love you and am happy now. See the sleepy woods and the dreamy sky. Let us sleep like them. The others do—far below they lie wrapped away in dreams. They have forgot us and we'll forget them. They remember nothing any more and I remember nothing any more. I am with you, with you forever, and you with me.

YOUNG DAVIE—*(With a low whistling laugh.)* Har-har-har.

TINA—You laugh so sweetly—sweet as a baby's laugh. *(She tries to kiss and fondle him.)* Little tiny baby boy! You shall have the bird and the little snake to play with. *(Laughing gaily.)* So cute and cunning they are. *(Touching his face lovingly.)* I used to be unhappy. How long ago it was—yesterday—years ago. The sky made me lonesome, I was afraid of the sun. The trees and the flowers and the foolish moon would not play with me. The fairies were all dead and gone. And then you came—a real fairy from the strange earth. All sadness and fear went away. *(Whispering.)* How long ago it seems! I was converted. My life was changed—in the church you raised me from the darkness of death and filled the world with light. I called to Jesus in the pulpit, day and night I wept over my sins, but he could give me no peace. You did. *(Worshipfully.)* You are Jesus! *(She stares at him with wide hungry eyes.)*

YOUNG DAVIE—*(Wrinkling his nose and making his Jew's-harp sound.)* Hee-hee-hee!

TINA—Your voice thrills me like music. The touch of you makes me tremble. *(Brokenly.)* I used to go in the fields and pick flowers

and I was afraid of the ground and the air around me. All was wrong. *(As if listening.)* Now all is right. And we will live here in the woods together, forever. *(Whispering blissfully.)* Down in the valley I see the light of Father's house. They're sitting there snug by the fire. They are not my father and mother. I am not their daughter. They said you came and stole me away. *(She bursts into low sobs and clings to him.)*

YOUNG DAVIE—*(Springing from her and capering about.)* Har-har-har! Hee-hee-hee!

TINA—*(Coquettishly as she moves toward the cabin.)* Come on, sweet one, my beautiful one. I am beautiful too. *(Whistling at him.)* Pshwee-wee-wee-wah. Come to my arms. *(She stands at the door waiting.)*

YOUNG DAVIE—*(Kissing his hand towards her.)* Blossom, I'll be back again! *(With a sneezing bark.)* Heigh! Heigh! Heigh! *(He runs away laughing into the forest at the right.)*

TINA—*(For an instant stupefied and then rushing to the edge of the clearing—with a scream.)* Come back, come back!*(The echo of his mocking laughter in the distance answers her. For a long while she stands as if stunned. Then slowly she seems to rouse herself to thought, then grows afraid of the woods shutting around her. Terrified she runs to the cliff and looks down and draws back with a shudder. She turns to enter the house, but the low gabble of the bird sets up, and she starts back afraid. She runs back and forth across the clearing as if in a cage, growing more and more awake and frightened like a lost child. Flinging herself down by the stone altar at last, her voice rises in a wail of fear and terror.)* Where are you! Come back. I'm afraid. Where am I? What is all this? Is this a dream? *(In a singing full of terror.)* I'm cold, cold. Help me! Come and help me! These woods! What is that in the woods? Stay away from me. Don't touch me. Who is that groaning? Is that the wind beating against the cliff? Wind, is that you crying? I'm crying. I'm lost. Help! Come back, my love! *(She lays her head on the stone, sobbing. Out of the underbrush at the right appears a squat figure whose face resembles* YOUNG DAVIE'S. TINA *starts up with a cry.)* Don't bother me! Mother, Father! It's the old Bad Boy come to get me! *(The figure approaches nearer, smirking*

and polite. TINA *wrings her hands before him.)* Is that Satan? Is that the Evil One? *(Starting.)* Yes, yes, I am evil. I have sinned. I have blasphemed against God and his holy Son Jesus. *(Stretching out her hands toward the morning star.)* Jesus, help me, save me! No, I've done no wrong. God our Father, forgive me my sins! *(She clasps her hands above her head in prayer. Over and over she utters the words "God" and "Father." The smirking figure disappears in the forest.* TINA *goes on praying and singing.)* He is so beautiful. The world is so weary and I have no home in it. *(Babbling foolishly.)* The preacher prayed for light to come unto me. It seemed the light. Send the light to me. Save me out of this darkness. I am thy child. Thou art kind to thy children. Help me, Lord, Lord help me. *(Walking along the edge of the cliff, comes the ungainly figure of the* YOUNG REVEREND. TINA *starts up with a shriek.)* Mercy! Mercy! *(Casting herself before him and embracing his feet.)* Blessed be the name of Jesus. I love Jesus. I love you, Jesus. I renounce this sin. I touch the hem of thy garment. I cry out the evil I have done. Wipe it from my heart. Peace, peace, give me peace. You will give me peace. Keep the Evil One from me. He stole me away from the valley. He led me into these rocks, and I am lost with him and I am saved with thee. I will be happy now. *(The figure stares down at her.)* Thy love will make me happy. *(The* YOUNG REVEREND *takes her by the hand and starts leading her up the incline, his head bowed. She snatches her hand away and flees back to the altar.)* No, no, not into that darkness. Darkness! Sin, darkness, trial, sin, suffering! *(Flinging her head down between her knees.)* I am dying, save me. Look at these faces around me! Keep them from me. There he comes. Ah, Lord! *(She throws up her head and falls senesless on the ground. The* YOUNG REVEREND *drops his head on his breast and descends the rocky steps of the cliff at the rear. Then in her delirium* TINA *sees a fierce wind blowing through the trees and* YOUNG DAVIE *among the branches like a monkey gleefully springing from bough to bough. Up the sky to the east appears a great spangle of fire, in the midst of which is a face evil and satanic, blowing on a trumpet. As if in time to the notes in the sky, she sees the trees leave their places and dance giddily about her, bending their branches down*

to prod and pinch her. A suffused greenish light spreads over the scene and the Old Man *and* Old Woman *come in and stand by her, one on either side.* Little Joey *enters, dressed in a yellow suit, and runs about the clearing chasing butterflies and picking flowers. A ragged blind crow sits on his shoulder as if fastened there.* Tina *looks up and stares at him wonderingly. She calls to him.)* Joey, Joey! Pretty flower! There goes a butterfly, with great yellow wings and spots on them. Catch him, honey. *(She crawls after him with outstretched hands.)* Come, hug sister's neck and we'll play together. *(Singing.)*

Tread, tread the green grass,
Dust, dust, dust.
Come all ye pretty fair maids
And walk along with us.

(She draws nearer to him and reaches to take him in her arms when Mother Goose *flies in astride a broom, a peaked cap on her head and a huge pair of wooden spectacles set on her flat bill. Hissing and gobbling she swoops down on* Little Joey *and carries him off wriggling like a worm.* Tina *sits staring after them, stupefied. She sees the* Old Man *and the* Old Woman *laughing at her. With a cry she falls by the altar and hugs it close as if for protection.)*

Old Man and Old Woman—*(In cracked and doleful voices like the chanting of the* Three Brothers.*)*

The rocks do laugh, the trees do sing.

(Their tittering giggle breaks about her. Sobbing she falls upon the altar. Then from the forest all about her bursts a troop of little dwarfish figures, little old men and women in green clothes and red caps, led by Young Davie *now in the shape of a Jack-muh-Lantern, a figure with goatish beard, thick sausage lips, hairy like a dog, but with* Davie's *gestures. Each of the figures carries a small switch, like those with which country people chastise their children, and each whips the prostrate girl as he marches around her. The old couple giggle a sort of music to which the marchers keep time.)*

DWARFS—*(Singing in high reedy voices.)*

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

JACK-MUH-LANTERN—*(Croaking.)*

Whistle in the Judas-tree,
Whereupon all hanged shall be
Underneath thy bloody bough—
Hee—hee——

(He bends down by TINA's *helpless form, caressing and cooing gutturally over her.)*

TINA—*(Screaming.)* Jesus, Jesus, save me! Oh, Lord have mercy upon me!

(The figure of the YOUNG REVEREND *appears by the edge of the cliff at the left. Trooping after him come the former love-mad youths and maidens from below, shadowy and fitful. They are mocking and hissing at the figure before them. Out from among the group runs a little hook-nosed man with a wallet at his belt in which he jangles silver coins with the gong-like sound of a bell. His sad eyes and his dress are those of* FATHER BASSEL. *He hurries obsequiously up to* JACK-MUH-LANTERN *and points to the Christ-like figure.* JACK-MUH-LANTERN *waves his arms about him and as the money keeps jingling the troops of dwarfs appear to* TINA *like a rabble of Jews, bearded and dressed in long flowing robes.* YOUNG DAVIE *now wears the flashing helmet and glittering mail of a Roman soldier. He carries a spear in his hand. The Jews crowd around the* YOUNG REVEREND, *hissing like geese, and stretching out menacing hands. The maids and youths from the darkness hand forward a cross over their heads. The Jews lay it on the ground and seize the* YOUNG REVEREND *and stretch him upon it.* BROTHER CADERS, *bare-armed and with a kirtle fastened close around him, comes forth carrying a heavy sledge-hammer on his shoulder. He stands gloating over the cross and stroking his long beard which now hangs like a quilt down to the ground.* YOUNG DAVIE, *planting his*

spear in the earth, pulls a handful of spikes from his clothes and sets them on the bare flesh of the YOUNG REVEREND. BROTHER CADERS, *with the rhythmic "hanh" of a Negro steel-driver, drives them in.* TINA *starts up and tries to fight her way forward to save the crucified one but the crowd push her roughly back. The* OLD MAN *and* OLD WOMAN, *leering and giggling, come over and remove the stone of the altar, leaving a hole in the ground, and the rabble sets the freighted cross aloft in its place.* TINA *flings her arms around the cross, kissing the bleeding feet of the young man. Then the crowd march around, mocking her and spitting and hissing at the nailed figure. The* YOUNG REVEREND *wags his head in anguished pain, stretching out his arms towards her, as if to say "Mother."*

TINA—My son! (BROTHER CADERS *lays down his hammer and suddenly wraps his beard suffocatingly around* TINA's *head. With a muffled gasp as she struggles to free herself.)* Ah, Lord!

(She lies still and presently BROTHER CADERS *winds up his beard on his hand like a roll of yarn. The* YOUNG REVEREND *lifts up his eyes and with a flat frog-like gasp, opens his lips in a wide soundless cry of "Abba, Father!"*

The scene vanishes and in the sky above the valley there is a sharp flash of lightning and a low rumble of the thunder's groan. Beyond the valley is seen the calm red of approaching sunrise. Far off to the left in the woods are heard the shouts of men and barking of dogs pursuing someone. Presently YOUNG DAVIE *trips lightly in. Curiously he stops and eyes* TINA's *form stretched on the ground.*

YOUNG DAVIE—*(Flapping his arms and crowing.)* Wake, the rooster crows. *(He bends over her and then with a loud animal wail bounds away from her terrified.)* Ah! Ah! *(Putting his hands wardingly before him, he flees into the cabin.* HARVEY *runs in carrying his gun, followed by* BROTHER CADERS, *the* THREE BROTHERS, FATHER BASSEL, *and the neighbors armed also. The young men and girls come slothfully and gesturing behind.)*

HARVEY—He's hid here some'r's. Look, somebody asleep on the ground! *(He turns the body over.)* Lord have mercy! Tina! She's dead!

(FATHER BASSEL *drops down by her with a cry.*)

FATHER BASSEL—My girl's dead—dead in these woods.

HARVEY—*(Rocking his head.)* The fool has killed her. Let me get my hands on him, let me find him and I'll tear him limb for limb. *(Raging.)* Find him, find him! Oh, they wa'n't nobody sweet like her!

(The neighbors whisper and murmur with horror and pity, and the THREE BROTHERS *come and get down by* TINA'S *body, praying and chanting softly.)*

THE THREE BROTHERS—The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. *(They pull out their little testaments and flutter the leaves by their nervous thumbs.)*

BROTHER CADERS—*(Stepping before the crowd and addressing them.)* The wages of sin is death—death! *(He points foolishly and solemnly to heaven.)*

FATHER BASSEL—Lord have mercy!

(The YOUNG REVEREND comes in and *stands looking down at the dead girl, his face grief-stricken and mute.)*

OTHERS—*(Turning and stretching out their hands to him, imploringly.)* Lord have mercy on us all! Pray for us.

FIRST NEIGHBOR—*(A snarveling envious fellow.)* What can he do? *(Spitting.)* Nothing.

SECOND NEIGHBOR—Here she is dead in the ha'nted woods!

THIRD NEIGHBOR—*(With a cry.)* The time of witchcraft!

FOURTH NEIGHBOR—Three days now the sun has set with the mark of blood.

FIFTH NEIGHBOR—Three days the chickens have hid under the house afraid, and the cows withold their milk.

SIXTH NEIGHBOR—The baby cried in its cradle. *(Shivering and pulling his coat collar up about him.)* The devil's plait was in its hair.

FIRST NEIGHBOR—*(Eyeing them malevolently and barking out.)* Witches! All night I heard them going by my house, talking in the wind.

OTHERS—*(Crying.)* Mercy!

FIRST NEIGHBOR—He was a witch and toled her off into these woods. (*Cocking an eye full of evil fright.*) Yea!

THIRD NEIGHBOR—*(Timidly.)* It was Willy's fire maybe.

SIXTH NEIGHBOR—*(Aghast, horrified.)* The end of the world is upon us. These signs were foretold in the Book!

OTHERS—*(Wailing as they fall upon their knees.)* Have mercy on us this day and forgive us our—

BROTHER CADERS—*(Wrathfully.)* Ye of little faith! Read the lesson of the Almighty and his protection.

THE THREE BROTHERS—Amen.

BROTHER CADERS—Through her a brood of horned and goat-footed demons would have come into this world. God said nay. She's dead!

(The young men and girls creep up around the body of TINA *where* FATHER BASSEL *and* HARVEY *are still bent in grief.)*

HARVEY—*(Springing up and grasping his gun.)* Kill him, kill him! *(He stands searching the surroundings with his eyes.)*

THE THREE BROTHERS—Kill him, kill him!

THE YOUNG GIRLS—*(Shrinking away from the young men who have crowded too close to them.)* Keep away from us.

(They throw themselves into the arms of their fathers. The young men draw off into a group, now laughing and snickering at the girls. An old farmer, knotted and gnarled, steps out and confronts them wrathfully.)

OLD FARMER—*(In a shrill voice.)* What shame have ye committed?

(The young men look down and say nothing.)

HARVEY—*(Shouting.)* He's in that house there! I hear him. *(He runs forward and enters the hut. The sounds of a scuffle ensue within and* YOUNG DAVIE *bursts out followed by* HARVEY.*)*

FARMERS—Ketch him! Ketch him!

THE THREE BROTHERS—*(Wagging their heads.)* Kill him! Kill him!

*(*YOUNG DAVIE *flees around in a circle trying to elude the blows of guns and fists. As he starts toward the cliff at the rear the young men and girls close in upon him and beat him to the earth.* HARVEY *rushes forward, knocks them aside and handcuffs him.)*

YOUNG DAVIE—*(To the* YOUNG REVERVEND *who stands with averted face.)* Brother!

FARMERS—Hee-hee-hee! Brothers! Call upon the devil.

YOUNG DAVIE—*(Raising his face and breaking into a laugh.)* Follow your Jesus!

(THE YOUNG REVEREND *is seen going away into the woods.)*

HARVEY—*(Taking him by the collar.)* Follow this one first to a tree.

FIRST FARMER—*(Trying to push himself forward as master of the situation.)* We'll lynch him!

CROWD—Lynch him!

(The OLD MAN *and* OLD WOMAN *come in and stand twittering and gabbling like two birds.)*

HARVEY—*(Spying them.)* Come to the burying! First him and then you!

(The OLD MAN *and* OLD WOMAN *come up to* YOUNG DAVIE *and lay their hands on him as if in farewell. He breaks from* HARVEY, *dives through the young men at the rear and with a laugh, springs over the cliff. The crowd horrified rush to the edge of the precipice, leaving* FATHER BASSEL *alone, bent over his daughter's body. The* OLE MAN *and* OLD WOMAN, *chuckling softly to themselves, steal away unnoticed through the woods after the* YOUNG REVEREND.)

A YOUNG GIRL—*(Terrified.)* He's falling down, down, like a rock!

BROTHER CADERS—God has killed him!

THE THREE BROTHERS—The almighty avenges us upon him.

HARVEY—He's struck the earth. He's dead.

A FARMER—Look!

THE YOUNG GIRL—*(In a high hysterical voice.)* He's running away across the field!

(The crowd stand transfixed and then turn and look at one another in fear and wondering foolishness.)

A FARMER—*(Shrilly.)* He was the devil!

AN OLD FARMER—*(Shaking his stick by his shriveled monkeyish face as he whines.)* Oh, he'll come again and ha'nt us. *(Whispering in terror.)* Ruin our daughters. Break open our houses and destroy us.

FIRST FARMER—*(With a moaning whoop.)* Witches, all were witches!

(The bird's low idotic gabble bursts from the little house.)

CROWD—O Merciful Father, save us!

BROTHER CADERS—Cry unto God and he will save you. Leave this place of abomination. *(He puts himself at their head and goes off at the left, beating march time with his hand aloft in the air and chanting a half-audible snatch of scripture, the* THREE BROTHERS *follow behind, wagging their heads and murmuring a psalm, their little testaments held meekly below their chins. The crowd follow, looking about afraid and repeating the Lord's Prayer.)*

BROTHER CADERS—An eye for an eye—a tooth—Yea, Lord Jesus!

CROWD—Our Father who art in heaven—

THREE BROTHERS—The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is, the compass of the world and they that dwell therein—

BROTHER CADERS—*(His voice like a trumpet.)* Hallelujah! Amen! For he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods—

HARVEY—*(Lifting* TINA *in his arms with a sob.)* Light as a feather she lies against me. She was a little flower. *(He starts slowly out with her and then stops, raises his head, his face lighting through its dullness in new thought. Presently he swings* TINA'S *body about in a gesture at the scene.)* They don't know. Fools! *(With swelling bitterness.)* Not them with their words. Not the preachers. Me—Harvey, I understand. *(Calling in angry triumph to the bird in the house.)* Talk on, I'll come with fire and destroy you. Evil shall have no home. *(Drawing back his shoulders—with loud buoyancy.)* Yes, Harvey will protect them and save them! *(He goes out with lifted face, grown suddenly careless of the dead girl in his arms.)*

FATHER BASSEL—*(Stumbling to his feet and staring vaguely about him.)* Oh, listen! *(Blubbering.)* Mother——*(He follows after, his gnarled and toilworn hands closing and unclosing as they hang at his side.)*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ERSKINE CALDWELL was born in White Oak, Georgia, on December 17, 1903. The stories in this volume are his first published works.

ROBERT CANTWELL was born in Little Falls, Washington, January 31, 1908. The story in this volume is his first published work.

DAVID CARTER was born in Detroit, Michigan, June 27, 1901. He was educated in the Detroit public schools, the University of Michigan, and Yale College, where he was class poet ('24) and won the John Masefield Poetry prize. After two years abroad, he became a feature writer for the *New York World*. He has published a poem in *Scribner's*.

CLARENCE E. CASON was born in Ragland, Alabama, December 20, 1896. He has an M.A. degree from the University of Wisconsin, where he taught English for four years. He has taught journalism at the University of Minnesota; has had several years of newspaper work in Washington, New York and Louisville; served at the aerial gunnery school in France during the World War; and at present is head of the Department of Journalism at the University of Alabama. He has contributed to the following magazines: *The Nation, The Independent, The Midland, The Virginia Quarterly Review,* the *International Book Review, New Masses,* the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology,* and *American Speech.*

E. E. CUMMINGS was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 14, 1894. He has an A.B. and M.A. from Harvard. He is the author of four books of poems: "Tulips and Chimneys," "XLI Poems," "& (and)" and "Is 5"; also "The Enormous Room" (prose) and "him," a play which was produced by the Provincetown Theatre. He has published in *The Dial, Broom, Vanity Fair,* and other magazines. He has received the *Dial* award for distinguished contribution to American literature.

S. GUY ENDORE was born in New York City, July 4, 1901. He was educated abroad and has an A.B. and M.A. from Columbia University. He has contributed to *The Bookman* and published various translations.

LINCOLN FITZELL ** was born in San Francisco, California, April 13, 1903. He was graduated from the University of California and has studied at the University of Montpellier, France. His poems have been published in *The New Republic.*

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER *** was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy and Harvard College. He is the author of "Fire and Wine," "Irradiations," "Sand and Spray," "Goblins and Pagodas," "Japanese Prints," "The Tree of Life," "Breakers and Granite," "Paul Gauguin: His Life and Art," "Preludes and Symphonies," "Parables," "Branches of Adam," and "The Black Rock." He has contributed to *The Yale Review, Poetry, The Dial, Print-Collectors' Quarterly,* and *The Criterion.*

WALLACE GOULD *** was born in 1882. He has contributed to *Others, The Dial, Broom, Poetry* and *The Little Review.* He has published one book of poems, "Aphrodite."

PAUL GREEN * was born on a farm near Lillington, North Carolina, March 17, 1894. He was educated in country schools, Buie's Creek Academy and the University of North Carolina. He has taught country school, served as private, corporal, sergeant, sergeant-major and second-lieutenant with the American Expeditionary Force in France. At present he is a member of the Faculty of the University of North Carolina and is now studying abroad on a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has had many plays published and produced, notably "In Abraham's Bosom," which was produced by the Provincetown Theatre and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1927. "Tread the Green Grass," in the present volume, is to be produced by the Provincetown Theatre during the season 1929-30.

LEON SRABIAN HERALD ** was born in Put Aringe, Armenia. He has contributed to *The Dial, This Quarter, The Nation, The World Tomorrow, Poetry, American Review* and *The Commonweal.* He is the author of "This Waking Hour" (poems).

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON was born in Brooklyn, New York, February 15, 1899. He was graduated from Columbia University. He is the author of "Galimathias" (poems) and "Zola and His Time." He has contributed to *Poetry, Broom, Secession, The Little Review, Transition, The New Republic, The Saturday Review, "Books"* and *The Outlook.*

* Contributed to the First American Caravan.
** Contributed to the Second American Caravan.
*** Contributed to the First and Second American Caravan.

STANLEY J. KUNITZ was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1905. He was graduated "summa cum laude" from Harvard, where he won the Lloyd McKim Garrison Poetry Prize. He has contributed verse and criticism to *The Dial, The Nation, Poetry, The Commonweal, Herald-Tribune "Books"*, and other periodicals. His first book of poems, "Intellectual Things," will be published in 1930.

ROBERT McALMON has contributed to *Poetry, The Little Review, Transatlantic Review, Transition, This Quarter*. He is the author of "Explorations," "A Hasty Bunch," "A Companion Volume," "Distinguished Air," "Village," and "Portrait of a Generation."

JOSEPH MITCHELL was born in Fairmont, North Carolina, July, 1908. He received his education at the University of North Carolina and has worked on a tobacco farm and newspapers. His work has been published in *Carolina Magazine* and *New Student*.

HELEN PEARCE was born on Long Island, New York, in 1902. She has studied music and painting and has contributed poetry and reviews to *The Nation, The New Republic, The Commonweal, Herald-Tribune "Books", Poetry*, etc. She is the author of "The Enchanted Barn."

PHELPS PUTNAM * was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1894. He has contributed to various periodicals and is the author of "Trinc" (poems).

WILLIAM ROLLINS, JR., was born in Belmont, Massachusetts, June 9, 1897. He has been a professional writer of popular fiction—serials and novelettes for the detective, mystery and confessional magazines—usually under pen names. He has published "Midnight Treasure." He is now at work on "Lewis Raey," a novel of which "The Obelisk," in the present volume, is the first part.

CARY ROSS was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, September 28, 1904. He was educated at Yale and Johns Hopkins Medical School. He is now engaged in selling real estate. He has contributed to *Transition*.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER * was born in Horodenko, Poland (then Austria-Hungary), August 25, 1896. He has contributed prose fiction, verse or criticism to *The Dial, Poetry, The Forum, Saturday Review of Literature, The Measure, Transition, Rhythmus, The World Tomorrow, Broom, The Nation, The Menorah Journal, The Little Review*, etc. He is the author of two published books, "Dr.

* Contributed to the First American Caravan.

Transit" (a novel), and "The Temptation of Anthony and Other Poems."

EVELYN SCOTT ** was born in Clarksville, Tennessee, January 17, 1893. She was educated in public and private schools up to the age of seventeen, after which she received no formal education. She spent six years in Brazil. She has contributed to *The London Outlook, The English Calendar, The Dial, Poetry, The Nation,* etc. Her published work includes "Precipitations," "Escapade" (autobiography), "In the Endless Sands" (with C. K. Scott), "The Golden Door," "The Narrow House," "Narcissus," "Ideals," "Migrations," "Witch Perkins" (juvenile) and "The Wave."

MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT was born in Moline, Illinois, before 1900. She has contributed poems to various magazines and has published the following books: "A Woman of Thirty," "Ballads of the Singing Bowl," "The King with Three Faces and Other Poems."

PEARL ANDELSON SHERRY was born in Chicago, Illinois, February 11, 1899. She has contributed to *Poetry, The Dial* and *The Forge*. She is the author of "Fringe," a book of poems.

JAMES HENRY SULLIVAN was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, February 27, 1899. He is an architect by profession. His contribution to the present volume is his first published work.

GERALD SYKES ** was born in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, December 31, 1903, of American parents temporarily in Canada. He attended the University of Cincinnati.

JEAN TOOMER ** was born in Washington, D. C., December 26, 1894. He studied in the University of Wisconsin and the College of the City of New York. He has contributed to *The Dial, The Little Review, Broom, The Double Dealer, The Chapbook* and *Carrefour*. His published books are "Cane" and "Lost and Dominant."

JOSEPH VOGEL ** was born in New York City, November 21, 1904. He has studied at Hamilton College and The New School for Social Research. He has contributed to *This Quarter, The New Masses, American Speech,* and *The American Hebrew*.

YVOR WINTERS *** was born in Chicago, Illinois, October 17, 1900. He has taught primer class and first grade, fourth and fifth grades, high school English, zoölogy, and athletics in New Mexico mining

** Contributed to the Second American Caravan.
*** Contributed to the First and Second American Caravan.

camps, also French and Spanish at the University of Idaho. He has bred dogs, milked cows and spent three years in bed. At the present time he is instructor in English at Leland Stanford University. He has contributed verse, prose or both to *The Dial, Secession, Transition, 1924, Others, Poetry, Little Review,* etc. He is now editing a mimeographed magazine, *The Gyroscope.* His published books are "The Immobile Wind," "The Magpie's Shadow," and "The Bare Hills," all verse. The essay in the present volume is the first part of a volume of criticism.

KATHLEEN TANKERSLEY YOUNG was born August 15, 1903. She has contributed poetry to *The Southwest Review, The Forge, "Free Verse," The Echo, Frontier* and *Blues.* She is an associate editor of *Blues.*

Continued from front flap of wrapper

can Caravan has enormously influenced recent American literature. It has introduced a number of new writers now comparatively well established; a considerable number of its contributions have since been republished as separate volumes. It has attracted writers like Eugene O'Neill, Ernest Hemingway, Evelyn Scott, William Ellery Leonard, Morley Callaghan, John Gould Fletcher, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Paul Green, Waldo Frank, to give first publication of their work to The American Caravan.

THE FIRST AMERICAN CARAVAN

"Positively engrossing . . . the book is doubly valuable; as a document, as evidence of the temper of the nation."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune.*

"A Caravan with a rich freight. . . . Honest, truthful, real."—*Boston Transcript.*

"A comprehensive record of what the more advanced writers are doing."—*N. Y. Evening Post.*

$5.00

THE SECOND AMERICAN CARAVAN

"Still a treasure chest."—*Harry Hansen, N. Y. World.*

"The Caravan, as a yearly phenomenon, is an indispensable document."—*The Bookman.*

$5.00

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN

A YEARBOOK OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

THE previous Caravans introduced or helped to establish many of the leading contemporary writers. In the "New Caravan" which appears in a distinctive new dress, and a new arrangement, the proportion of work by distinguished new writers is still greater, but writers of established reputation are well represented, as will be seen in the subjoined table of contents.

Edited by
ALFRED KREYMBORG
—
LEWIS MUMFORD
—
PAUL ROSENFELD

A FULL LENGTH NOVEL—
William Rollins, Jr.....The Obelisk

A FULL LENGTH PLAY—
Paul Green.....Tread the Green Grass

STORIES—
Jean Toomer.....August
S. Guy Endore.....Cataract
Erskine Caldwell....Midsummer Passion
Tracing Life With a Finger
Joseph Vogel.....Wedding
Pearl A. Sherry.....Intact
Joseph Mitchell
Cool Swamp and Field Woman
Gerald Sykes.....Geld Your Enemy
Robert McAlmon
An Illiterate But Interesting Woman
E. E. Cummings.....(Untitled)
Robert Cantwell
Hanging By My Thumbs

POEMS—
Phelps Putnam
The Daughters of the Sun
Stanley J. Kunitz.....Thirteen Poems
Marjorie Allen Seiffert
Ballad of the Hangman's Widow

POEMS (Cont'd)—
Evelyn Scott.....Nine Poems
Wallace Gould .....To Emily

Lincoln Fitzell.....Evolution
Cary Ross.....Actually: A Poem
For Mimi
(On Skiing)
James Henry Sullivan.....Full Levant
Canyon City
Kathleen T. Young
City Without Images
Matthew Josephson.....Toxins
Helen Pearce.....Alabaster Flowering
Still Life
Adonais
Leon S. Herald.....Portrait of E. A.
Perversity
The Lake
Analysis
Isidor Schneider.....Three Poems
John Gould Fletcher.....Ballad
David Carter.....The Visitor
Clarence E. Cason.....Home Talent

ESSAY—
Yvor Winters
The Extension and Reintegration of the Human, etc.